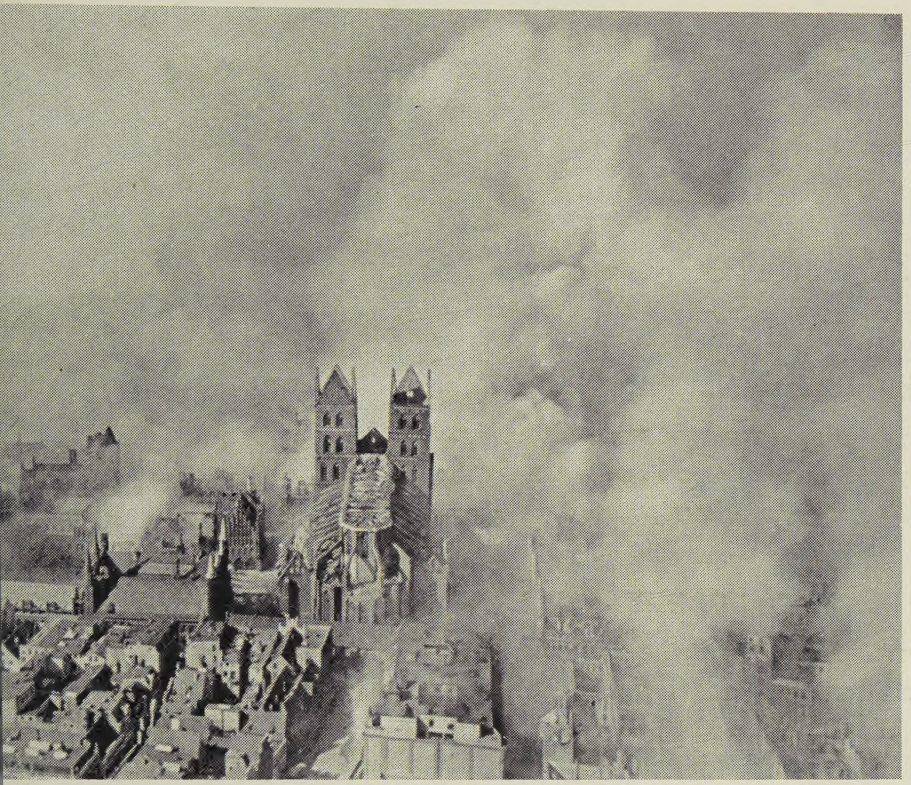
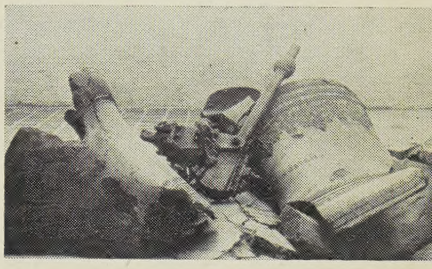
MENNONITE LIFE

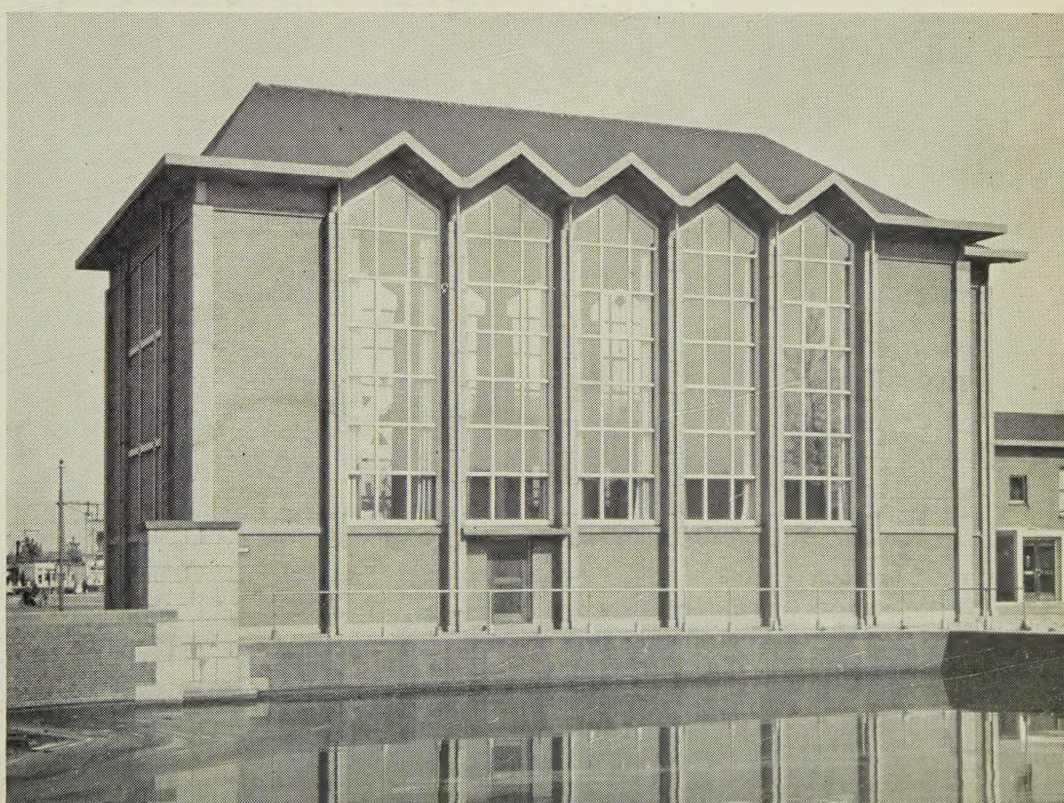
October, 1955





An Era of Reconstruction

(see inside cover)



ONITE LIFE

niversary

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Published in the interest
of the best
in the religious, social, and economic phases
of Mennonite culture

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Mennonite Life

North Newton, Kansas

COVER

Bombing of Luebeck, 1942. Symbolic of large scale destruction during World War II. (Top, right) When the towers of the church collapsed, the bells crashed on the floor where they are kept today as a monument. The bells announcing over centuries glad tidings and sad events are speaking even now that they have been silenced. The church has been rebuilt.

Numerous Mennonite churches were destroyed during World War II. The cover features the new Rotterdam Mennonite Church symbolizing the reconstruction era 1945-1955.

MENNONITE LIFE

An Illustrated Quarterly

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X October, 1955 No. 4

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ite Life is an illustrated Quarterly magazine published in January, April, July and October by Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. as second-class matter December 20, 1946, at the post office at North Newton, Kansas, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Christ in Whom is the hope of eternal life. We mean what Jesus meant when He said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again," and again "If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Let us observe now a number of implications of such discipleship for the student.

The Christian disciple is both a believer and a learner. He is one who is thoroughly committed to his Lord yet is ever learning and ever growing. He is not a dogmatist, who believes but does not question or learn, neither is he a skeptic, who questions but does not believe. He is not just a believer, nor just a learner but he is and must remain both. Jesus said, "Believe in me" but he also said "Learn of me."

Modern secular education has tended to exalt learning at the expense of faith, inquiry at the expense of convictions and questions at the expense of answers. The ideal student has been, as Moberly says, the one for whom, "all questions are open, all assumptions tentative, all conclusions provisional." In this approach convictions were scorned and students were encouraged to challenge everything they had believed, and to be concerned only about "proveable facts."

Today we recognize that men do not live by facts alone, they live also by faith. Modern man knows many facts but these facts do not save him. The old bromide that man today needs more education, in the sense of more information, is clearly inadequate.

The Christian disciple is concerned about facts. He wants to learn truth wherever he can but he is also aware that he will never know everything and that knowledge alone does not save. He therefore agrees with Gilbert K. Chesterton that the most important thing about knowing the truth is "to know the important truth." This important truth he has found in God as revealed in Jesus Christ, who said, I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. To this Truth he has committed himself. In the light of this life-transforming commitment he studies the Bible, natural science, social science, the humanities—but, again quoting Moberly, "he studies on his knees. He knows that he cannot explain everything about God and life but he knows also that he cannot suspend judgment because he cannot suspend living."

From the standpoint of the Christian teacher therefore as M. V. C. Jeffreys so effectively points out, indoctrination ceases to be "an educational crime." It is an educational necessity, in religion as in table manners. "The crime is to indoctrinate in such a way as to destroy the freedom and responsibility of the pupil."

In education for Christian discipleship there must be both indoctrination and investigation, both faith and inquiry, both commitment and reflection. This makes education a much more intricate thing than we may realize. Howard Lowry in *The Minds Adventure* is profoundly right when he says that "Fact-collecting, open-mindedness as an end of life, to be forever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth, is less ardous than reflective commitment. Reflection is easy and commitment is easy; but the two together—that is an educational task requiring the highest powers." Yet just this is our task as a Christian college, to develop intelligent, informed but also deeply convinced Christian disciples.

Individual in Community

Moreover, the Christian disciple is an individual but he is an individual in community. Jesus called His disciples one by one, but as he did so, they became members of a group. Jesus taught His disciples to pray "Our Father . . . Thy Kingdom come." It is abundantly clear that in the New Testament individuals were important, but the group, the church, the fellowship, the community was also important. New Testament discipleship was always a deeply personal, but never a private, affair. It always involved an interplay between the individual and the community.

Here too in our educational procedures we have too often played off the individual against the community or the community against the individual. Much of modern education is individual-centered. The Harvard Committee report declared, "The purpose of all education is to help students live their own lives." Individualism in many instances has run rampant with emphasis on individual thinking, individual abilities, individual interests, and individual development. This emphasis has produced a lot of people who are best described as "all elbows," who simply elbow their way through life or "porcupine personalities," whose ego bristles at any point you may touch them.

Education for Christian discipleship seeks to develop the individual self, but also a sense of community fellowship. Nels Ferre says that the Christian rule here is relatively simple, we must be concerned equally with the individual and the community. This he says applies to standards of conduct and policies of school discipline as well as to other areas.

This, of course, is easier said than done, but it is clear that one of the things desperately needed is the development of such a sense of community spirit and such a sense of church fellowship that every offence of the individual is seen also as an offence against the group.

Free But Responsible

This leads then to the recognition that while the Christian disciple is truly a free man, he is also a responsible person.

Our Lord Jesus Christ made it perfectly clear that true discipleship means true freedom. "If ye abide in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the tuth, and the truth shall make you free. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:31, 32, 36).

Christian discipleship means freedom, but it is

om in Christ. To be in Christ is to be properly re- to Him and to His kingdom and to our fellow men, hat is at once to be a responsible person controlled ve. Our consuming concern is no longer freedom as l in itself, but freedom as the open way to love s as God has loved us and to serve our fellowmen eir needs. That approach in education in which ers and students, in the name of freedom, disclaim nsibility for their utterances and their conduct is y not in harmony with education for Christian dis- hip. Education for discipleship produces scientists ave a moral concern about what happens as a re- of their discoveries, teachers who feel responsible e effect of their words on their students, doctors real concern for their patients far exceeds their rn for the fees, and ministers who carry a strong of responsibility to God and man for every word speak and every decision they make. The Christian le takes with utmost seriousness the biblical in- on, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill w of Christ."

is too has been a sadly lacking note in modern rresponsibility is a demon which haunts every col- campus and every church community. The faults vils which we see are always considered someone business—the faculty's, the dean's, the pastor's. eep on saying, Why don't *they* do something about ut the true Christian disciple, whoever he is, feels in some sense he also is responsible, at least in He recognizes that because of the reality of free- each person is responsible for his own life, but he ealizes that because of the compulsions of Chris- ve, each of us is also his "brother's keeper." Free- and responsibility must go hand in hand in the ian community and the bond which unites them ontrols them is Christian love.

e of your greatest experiences should be the en- nent of your horizons, intellectually, socially, spir- . From more or less restricted horizons of infor- n you will be invited to move out into vastly larger This is what should be happening daily in the y as you read, and in the class room as you listen, your study as you work out your assignments. re to be introduced to new facts and new ideas, of which may startle you and even disturb you, out which you need to know as a growing Chris- isciple who would be effective in today's world.

llege experience also affords occasion for meeting ersons. Some of these will be faculty members but from whom some of you will learn as much or will be your fellow students. These come from communities, some from other countries and other es and other denominations. Some of them will be confused as you may think you are, while others e very sure that they know what life is all about. is intermingling of personalities, this rubbing of and emotional and spiritual as well as physical shoulders with persons different from yourself is of greatest value in the development of intelligent, free, and responsible Christian discipleship.

Personal Freedom and Fellowship

Another rather significant aspect of college experience is the increase of personal freedoms with the corresponding increase of responsibility for the personal choices made. The freedom of a college student obviously is not absolute or unlimited nor as great as some imagine that it should be. There are required courses and activities and standards of conduct which represent the best judgment of the larger community as to what is best for the individual and for the total program. To imagine a life without requirements is to be totally naive and unrealistic. But beyond these necessary requirements the college student is still, in general, more free than he has been before, with more fredom in the use of his time, in the choice of his associates, in the practice of his religious life and in the selection of his activities. With such freedom obviously comes the possibility of wrong choices and the failures which inhere in them.

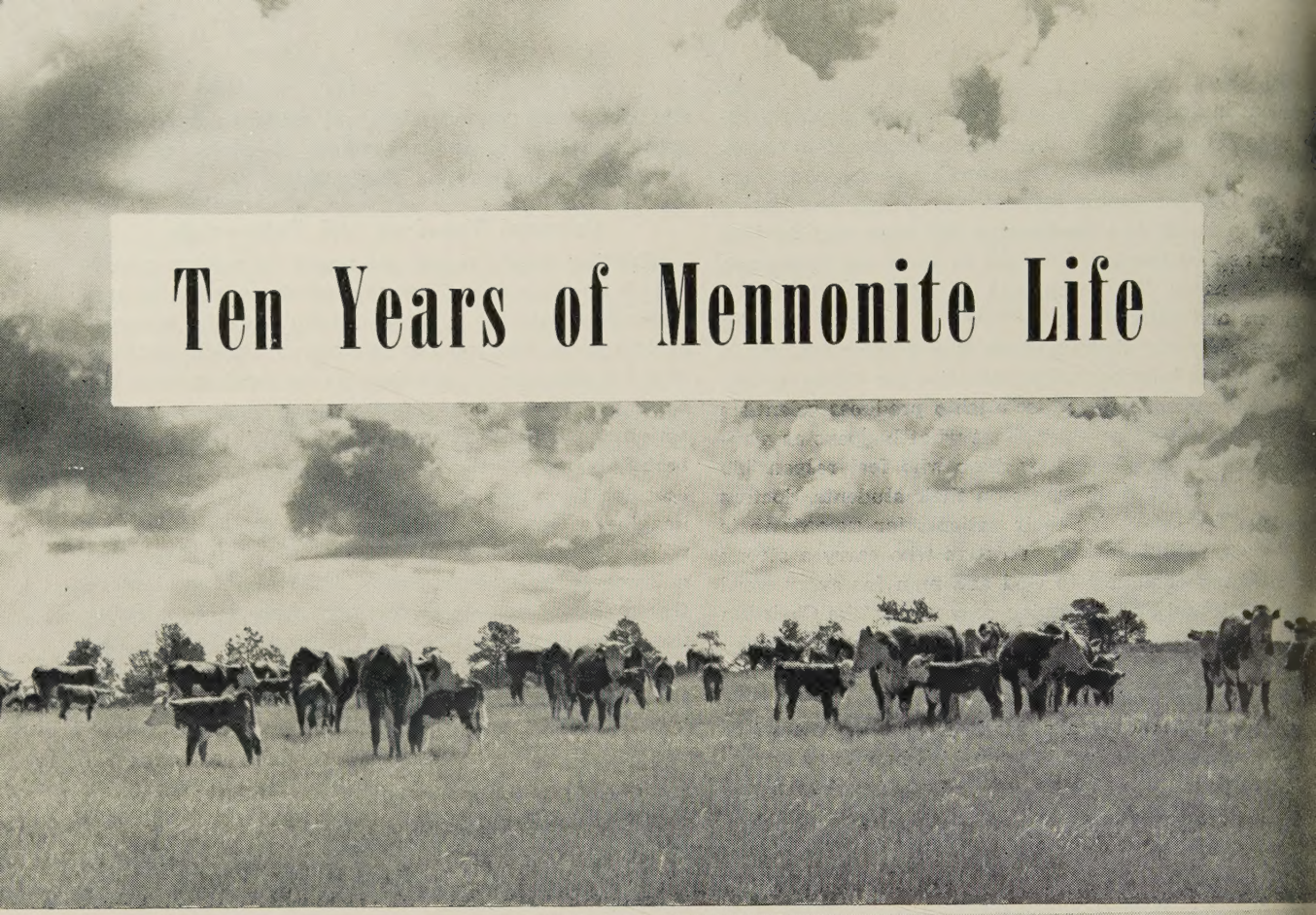
Yet this exercise of freedom, in an atmosphere of helpful friendly counsel, is also essential in the development of free and responsible Christian discipleship. Christian discipleship, you see, must finally have its moorings within ourselves and not merely in the traditions of our fathers or in the ideals of our churches or in the regulations of our institutions. It is a genuine personal faith in Jesus Christ and commitment to Him as the Lord of the whole life which is essential and which we earnestly desire will blossom forth in your college experience.

Finally, there is the experience of togetherness or true fellowship in which each of us begins to feel not only appreciation but also responsibility for the other and for the welfare of the whole group. Dormitory life, student government, participation and leadership in various clubs and organizations, inter-collegiate competition on the athletic field and otherwise can contribute significantly to this sense of belonging together.

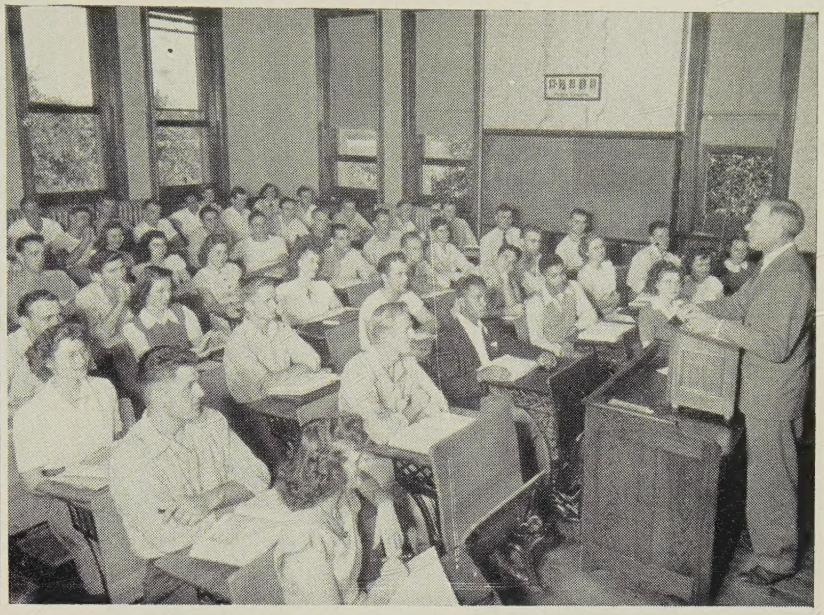
But the real basis of our togetherness in a Christian school is our oneness in Jesus Christ. It is this sense of community, this recognition of what the church really is, regardless of our denominational loyalties, that needs to come to the fore in our school experience. Such education for Christian discipleship may appear to be an unrealistic dream. But God's intention for us this year is not failure. "All things are possible to them that believe." "Let us then lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us win with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

EDITORIAL NOTE: Address given at the formal opening of the school year at Bethel College, 1955. Slightly abbreviated.

Ten Years of Mennonite Life



Symbols of Abundance

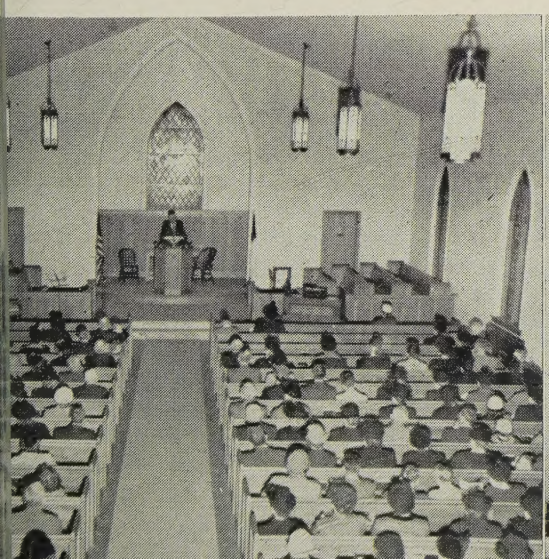


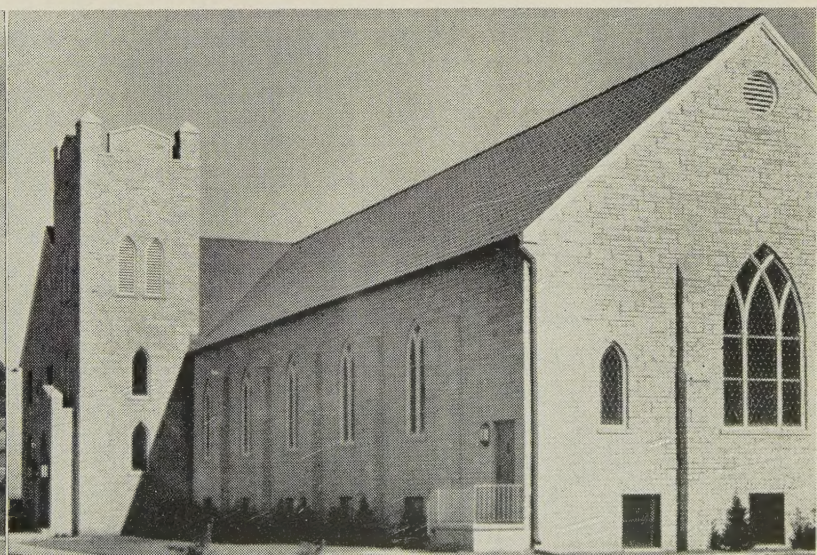
Symbols of Freedom

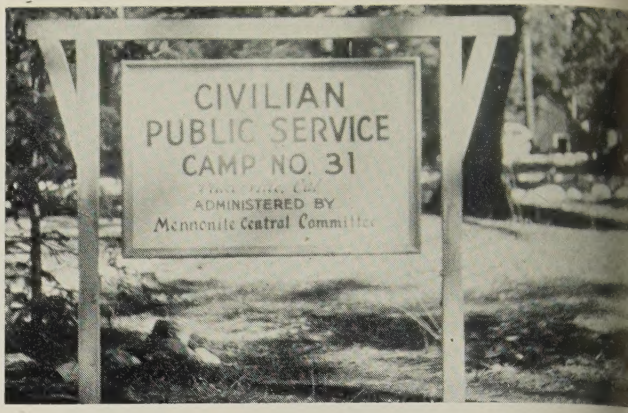
Symbole der Wohlfahrt und Freiheit

le many nations were undergoing severe hardships economic, social, cultural, and political life the on of the United States and Canada enjoyed a economic prosperity. In Europe millions were home, country, job and daily bread and many illions had for years been deprived of freedom in s of dictatorship. In North America, even dur- darkest hours of the war, only slight sacrifices were n the realm of personal freedom and economic . Religious freedom prevailed without restrictions. rches or schools were destroyed. To perpetuate vn heritage Mennonites could establish numerous ry schools; all colleges could continue, although ollment dropped slightly. Soon after the war the ent increased to capacity.

n non-resistant Mennonites enjoyed "the blessings" part of a victorious and prosperous nation in one darkest hours of the world. This was the situation ten years ago when the illustrated quarterly magazine *Mennonite Life* was founded and began to convey and interpret to its readers the happenings around the globe, particularly those that pertain to Mennonites.



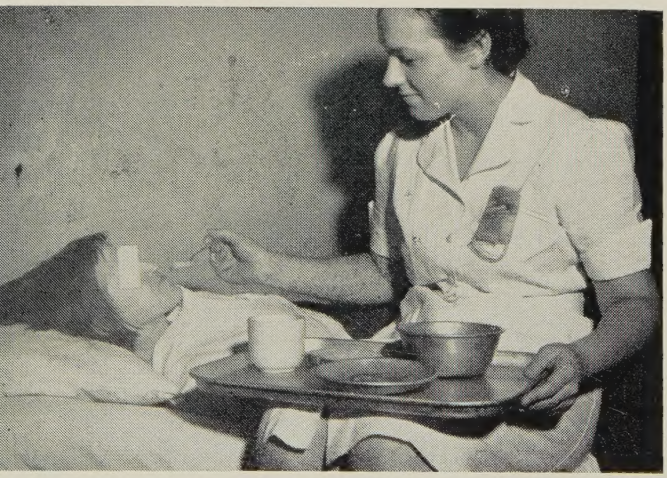


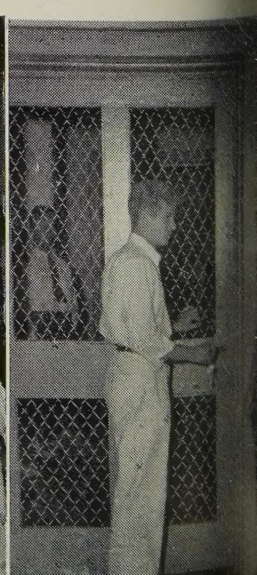


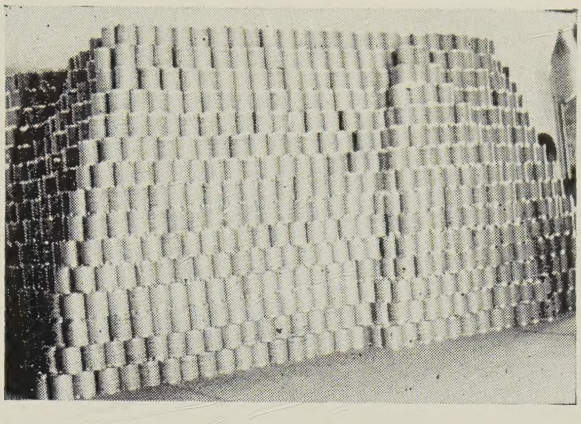
Alternative Service

Ersatzdienst waehrend der Kriegszeit

During World War II a large number of Mennonites and other citizens of the U.S.A. and Canada availed themselves of the opportunity of doing work of national importance in lieu of military service on the grounds of conscientious objection to war. A total of 12,000 young men did their service in agriculture, forestry, mental hospitals, etc. What may not always have seemed to be a service of "national importance" eventually bore fruit. The establishment of a number of mental hospitals by the Mennonites is only one example of many.



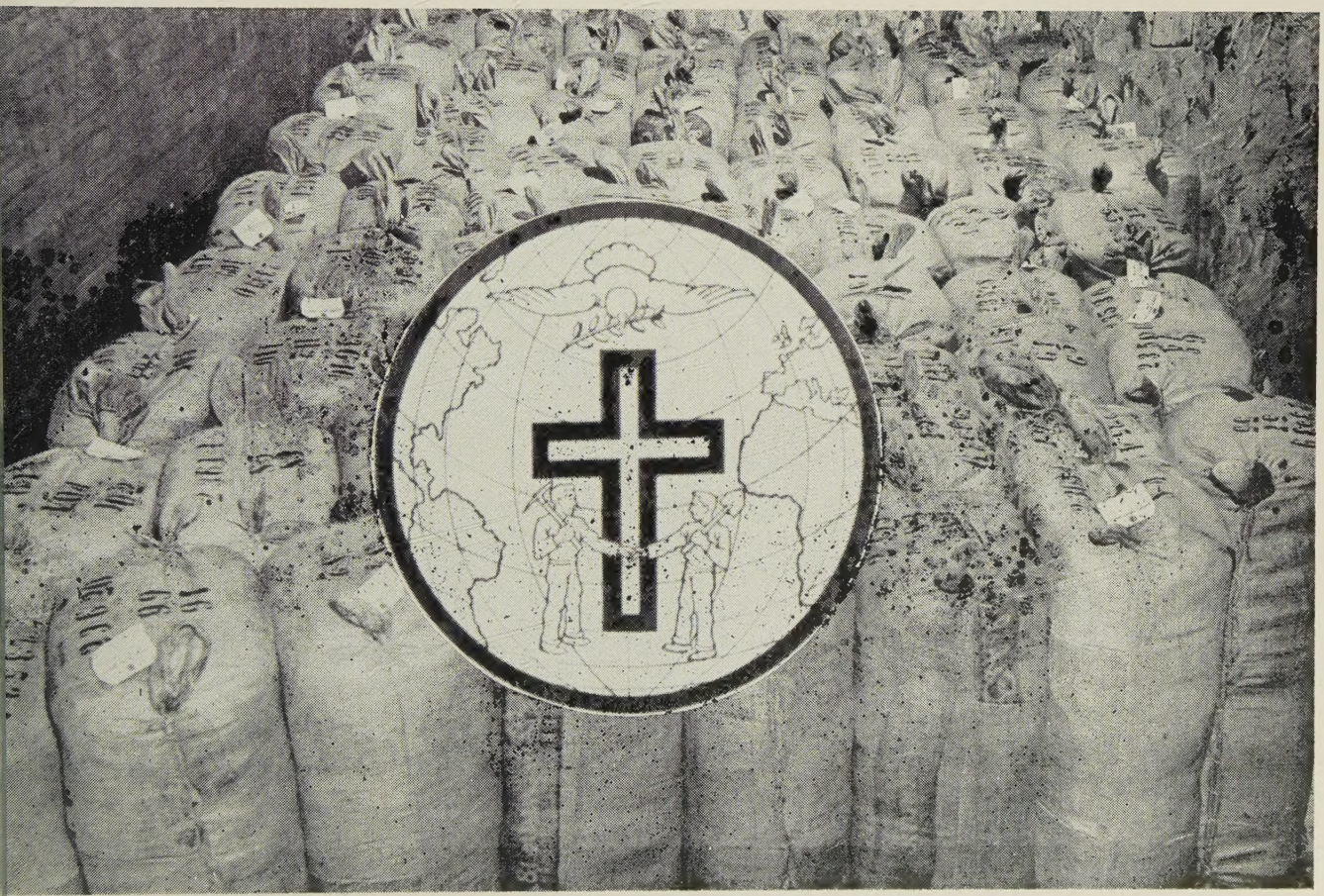




Getting Ready for Relief Work

Anfang der Hilfsarbeit

hen word reached the communities and congrega-as to the results of the disastrous war abroad young prepared themselves for service and church members to contribute food, clothing, and other goods for ent abroad.



Europe on the Brink of Disaster

Few pictures were taken of the bombing of large cities when many thousands perished in one night. These photos bear the following imprint: Lübeck—28. 3. 1942 Luftangriff (Air raid). (See also cover).

Results of Modern Warfare

Die Folgen des Weltkrieges

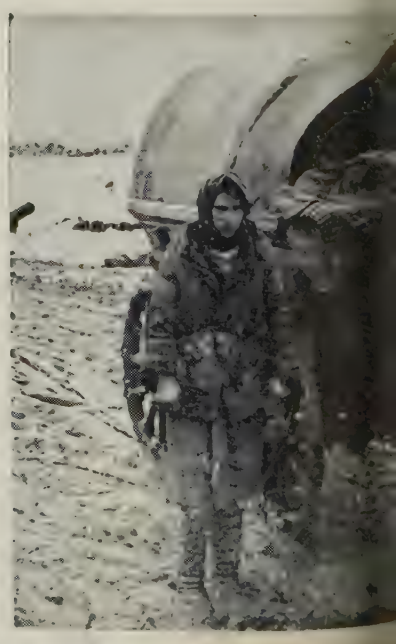
After the air raid.

Rev. and Mrs. A. Fast, Emden,) walk over the ruins of their beloved ı after an air raid. The Hamburg onite Church seen in the distance v), surrounded by rubble, fortunately ed. A number of other Mennonite nes in Holland and Germany were yed, not to speak of the many busi- enterprises and dwelling places that ed a like fate.

(Oben) Nach dem Bombenangriff. (Mitte) Herr und Frau A. Fast, Emden, suchen die Stätte wo einst ihre Kirche stand. (Links) Die Kirche der Mennoniten in Hamburg blieb wie ein Wunder erhalten.

Refugees on the Road

Fluechtlinge unterwegs



Many millions of people lost their homes and were compelled to leave their native land during the war. They became displaced persons (D.P.s).

Viele Millionen mußten Hab und Gut verlassen und flohen von Ort zu Ort. Sie wurden heimatlos (D. P.s).

Arrived at Last

Endlich angekommen

e Mennonites of the Ukraine, Poland and Prussia fled ard in 1943 when the Red Army successfully resisted erman invasion and finally invaded Germany itself. pictures tell only a part of the story of how they om Russia and Poland to Prussia and from Prussia nmark and Western Germany. In many cases the made this trip alone since the men were in labor or in the army. At last some of them arrived in a zone. The little boy in the picture even saved his geon and brought it along.

e Mennoniten der Ukraine, Polen und Preussen beim Vordringen der Roten Armee in 1943 em Westen. Diese Bilder veranschaulichen nur Teil der Tragödie, wie sie von Rußland nach en und von dort nach Westdeutschland flohen. von ihnen wurden nach Rußland zurückgeschickt. zlich erreichten einige einen Ort der Sicherheit.

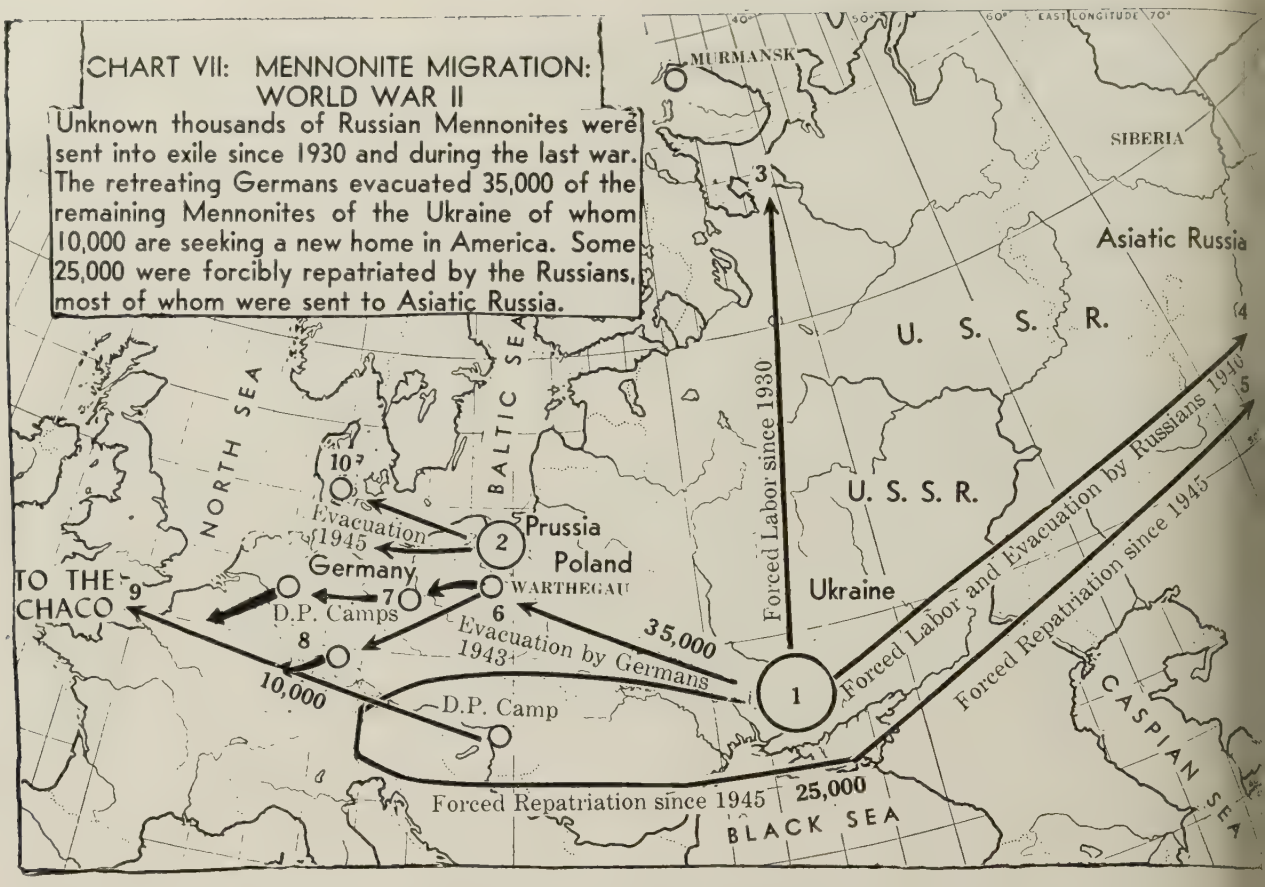


CHART VII: MENNONITE MIGRATION: WORLD WAR II
Unknown thousands of Russian Mennonites were sent into exile since 1930 and during the last war. The retreating Germans evacuated 35,000 of the remaining Mennonites of the Ukraine of whom 10,000 are seeking a new home in America. Some 25,000 were forcibly repatriated by the Russians, most of whom were sent to Asiatic Russia.
MURMANSK
SIBERIA
Asiatic Russia
U. S. S. R.
U. S. S. R.
NORTH SEA
BALTIC SEA
Forced Labor since 1930
Evacuation 1945
Prussia
Poland
Germany
WARTHEGAU
D.P. Camps
Evacuation by Germans 1943
35,000
10,000
D.P. Camp
Ukraine
Forced Labor and Evacuation by Russians 1941-45
Forced Repatriation since 1945
TO THE CHACO
Forced Repatriation since 1945
25,000
BLACK SEA
CASPIAN SEA

Behind the Iron Curtain

Some 25,000 Mennonites from Russia who had fled to Germany were sent back to Russia by the Red Army in and after 1945. They were sent to Siberia where many of their brethren were already located in forest labor camps (below).

Packages Arrived

Ankunft der Pakete

Clothing and food shipped by the MCC, CARE, Church World Service, CROP, and other organizations were received as an answer to prayer.

A Handshake of Welcome. Processing Refugees (below).

Refugees from the east were welcomed by representatives of the MCC, gathered in camps, and processed for im migration to South America and later also to Canada.

New Horizons for Refugees

Der neuen Heimat entgegen

New Beginning in Paraguay

Anfang in Paraguay

At last the refugees have arrived at their destination and are at work establishing homes and transforming the uninhabited Chaco (Green Hell) of Paraguay.

Prussian Refugees in Uruguay

Danziger in Uruguay

Many of the Prussian Mennonite refugees, who had to leave beautiful homes and well kept farms, are again pioneering in Uruguay.

A Welcome in Canada

Willkommen in Kanada

Gradually the borders were opened for migration to Canada. About half the Mennonite refugees from Russia as as some from Galicia, Poland, and Prussia have found their way to Canada where they are enjoying the economic ntages and the freedom of living in a democracy.

From Canada to Mexico

Von Kanada nach Mexico

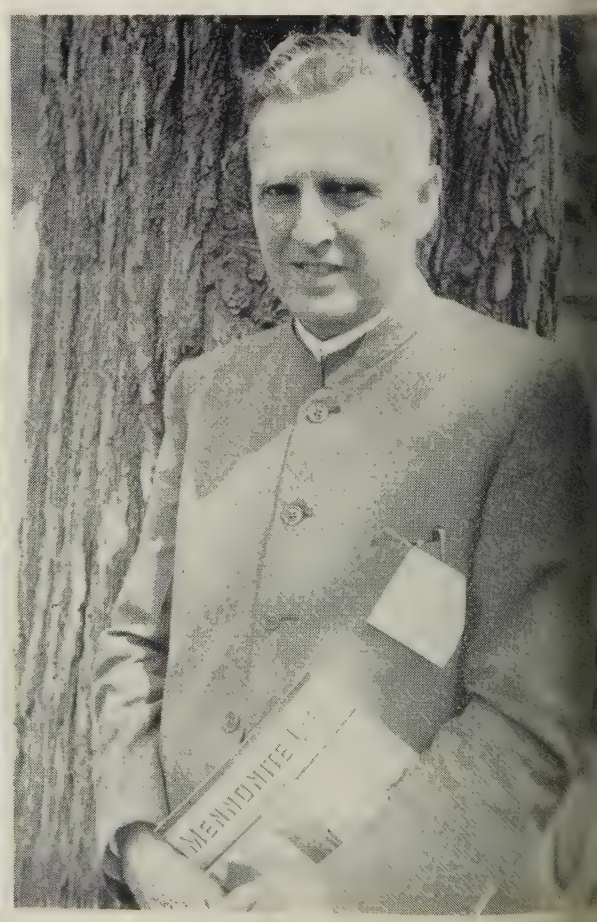
Following the trek of the Old Colony Mennonites who had settled in Mexico in the early twenties some *Kleine einde* Mennonites left their beautiful homes and farms in Manitoba in order to pioneer in Mexico.

Mennonite World Conferences

Mennonitische Weltkonferenzen

In 1948 Mennonites from all countries, except Russia, convened at Goshen, Indiana, and Newton, Kansas, to review the situation and to be challenged in the work of a corporate witness. This was the first World Conference after World War II and the fourth in general. Most of the many Mennonite groups of America participated in the event. In 1952 the second post-war World Conference convened at Basel, Switzerland (see pictures p. 165). The next Conference is to convene in Karlsruhe, Germany, in 1957.

Teilnehmer der Mennonitischen Weltkonferenz in North Newton, Kansas, im Jahre 1948. Vertreter aller mennonitischen Gruppen und Konferenzen trafen sich hier.



8 versammelten sich Mennoniten aller Länder in Goshen, Indiana, und North Newton, Kansas. Dies war die Weltkonferenz nach dem Kriege. 1952 folgte eine zweite in Basel. 1957 wird die nächste in Karlsruhe, tschland stattfinden.

New Programs of Churches and Colleges

Neue Programme in Gemeinden und Schulen

Among the many new programs of the churches after World War II was the construction of new churches. In many cases the patterns and materials of the pioneer days were discarded and new architectural designs introduced.

Roland H. Bainton (second in rear), speaker and dinner guest at first Menno Simons Lectureship, Bethel College.

Among the new ventures of the colleges were such programs as the establishment of the Menno Simons Lecture- Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, and the Conrad Grebel Lectures, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

no Simons und Konrad Grebel Stiftungen wurden von Bethel College und Goshen College eingeführt, die Prinzipien und Lehren des Täufertums zu studieren und bekannt zu machen. Konferenzen, Schulen Gemeinden beteiligen sich vielfach an Radio-Programmen.

Congregations, conferences, and schools began to sponsor radio programs from coast to coast.

New Avenues of Christian Service
Gelegenheiten zum Dienst

Voluntary Service
Freiwilligen Dienst

Among the new avenues of Christian service were the Voluntary Service projects involving Mennonite young people from all groups in America and abroad.

MCC Outreach At Home

Das Zeugnis daheim

One of the results of the Civilian Public Service pro-
m of the American Mennonites was the establishment of
umber of mental hospitals most of which were spon-
ed by the MCC.

Mennonitische Nervenheilanstalten entstanden in
erika als Resultat des Ersatzdienstes während des
eges.

MCC Outreach Abroad

Das Zeugnis "Im Namen Christi"

The outposts and centers established by Mennonites of America in Europe, through MCC channels such as the international Mennonite home at Heerewegen, The Netherlands, and the MCC centers at Frankfurt and Basel, continued even after the emergency was over. Voluntary Service workers, PAX units and others continued the witness "in the name of Christ."

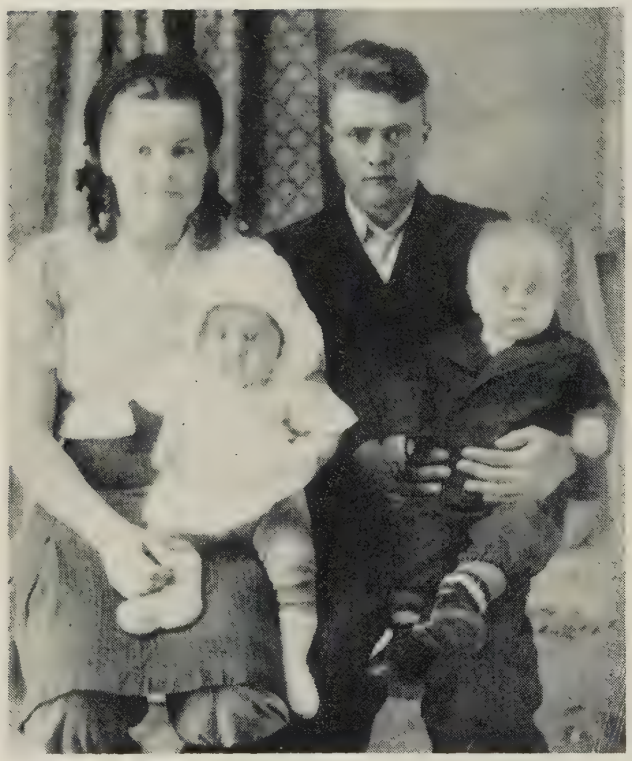
Reconstruction in Germany

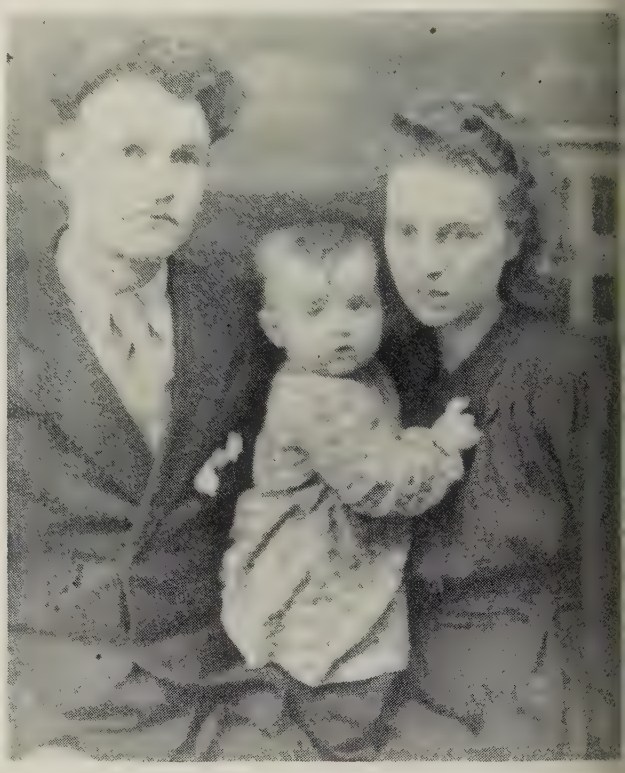
Wiederaufbau in Deutschland

The Dutch, German and French Mennonites engaged in a vigorous reconstruction program. Homes for the aged, cularly for German Mennonite refugees from the east, were established. New churches such as the ones at Krefeld below), Gronau, Emden, Rotterdam, etc. were erected on the ruins of those which had been destroyed during war. Many large and old Mennonite business firms were completely destroyed. The reconstruction program in many s has just begun.

Behind the Iron Curtain Today

Hinter dem Eisernen Vorhang





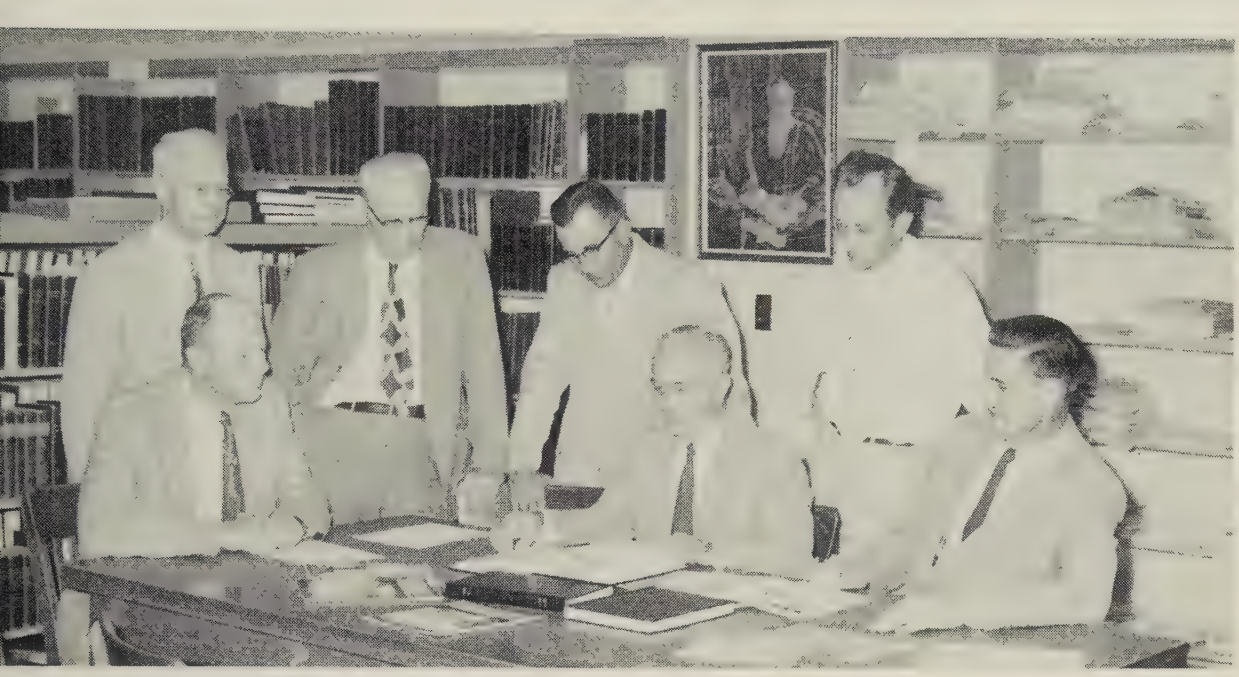
Life behind the Iron Curtain goes on. These pictures were received from Siberia after World War II.

As to the Mennonites on the other side of the Iron Curtain it must be said that the inhabitants of the former settlements and members of congregations are completely dispersed. Hardly any Mennonites were left in Danzig, the former Prussia, and Poland. Those from the Ukraine have mostly been sent to Siberia. For a number of years the contact between them and the Mennonites of other countries was almost completely broken. At the moment there seems to be a slight relaxation. Some letters and even pictures are reaching us again. *Mennonite Life* will, as in the past, continue to serve as an authoritative source of information pertaining to the fate of our brethren of Russia.

In the MCC Nachbarschaftsheim of Berlin refugees arrive daily from the East zone of Germany.

Ten Years Mennonite Life

Zehn Jahre "Mennonite Life"



utive Board of *Mennonite Life* (from left to right): D. C. Wedel, Chairman; H. A. Fast; E. G. Kaufman, Vice Chairman; y Martens, Treasurer; R. C. Kauffman (extreme right), Secretary; with Editor and Assistant Editor, Cornelius Krahn (sitting in middle) and John F. Schmidt (standing in back).

Some of those who inspired the publishers of *Mennonite* when it started ten years ago are no longer with us. paved the way and kept the vision clear for great gs to happen. It is our duty and challenge to continue work begun. Looking back over the ten years we are eful for the privilege of serving our readers in this . We are also thankful for the inspiration which the ributors to this magazine and the readers have been to the publishers and editors. Without this source *Mennonite Life* would not have been able to carry on this challenging task. We appreciate greatly your loyalty in renewing promptly your subscriptions and in gaining new readers for this magazine which, as we are continually assured, fulfills a unique mission in the realm of Mennonite publications. We sincerely solicit prayers, good will and support in the years to come.

h work goes into one issue of *Mennonite Life* before it reaches the reader. Articles have to be secured, prepared and submitted to the printer. Pictures are selected and the dummy is prepared and submitted to the printers.

To Our Readers:

Ten years ago Western civilization was at the brink of disaster. Many of the countries who had helped to produce this civilization had reached their darkest hour in history. The bloody war was ended and the cold war between two rivals was beginning. Today many of the wounds caused by the last war have been healed. Much of the rubble has been cleared away. Many of the displaced persons have found new homes and the outlook in general is brighter again. It is true that overnight nuclear warfare could make World War II appear as child's play. Nevertheless with smiles and handshakes exchanged between East and West, the tension created by the cold war is lightened and a general optimism prevails. Time will tell whether the foundations for this optimism are substantial or whether this is only an interlude in which each partner tries to prepare himself for a seemingly unavoidably show-down before the final curtain introduces the last act of the tragedy of Western civilization.

Viewing the ten years since the end of World War II when *Mennonite Life* was started, we as publishers, editors and readers cannot claim that our magazine has profoundly influenced any phase of the affairs of this world. Nor can we say that that was the purpose for which the magazine was founded. And yet we can claim that on a small scale it has had some influence and is to some extent achieving what it set out to do, namely, to inform its readers about the religious, social and economic phases of the Mennonites everywhere. Not only did the publishers and editors aim to present carefully prepared articles on these various subjects but they also strive to illustrate them with the best possible pictures. The willingness of many writers to produce good articles on subjects of interest to the readers indicates that there is no lack of material. The printers have been doing an excellent piece of work and are prepared to continue doing so. We have faithful readers who have been on our mailing list since *Mennonite Life* was begun. All this would make it appear that the future of *Mennonite Life* is rosy and without thorns.

Mennonite Life has its problems and difficulties. To relate them without reference to other Mennonite publication efforts as a whole would again result in our not telling the whole story. The basic problem which *Mennonite Life* faces is that which most Mennonite periodicals face, and we could add, which most of the smaller denominations confront in their publication efforts. We get more than a hundred Mennonite weekly, monthly and quarterly periodicals, published by the various Mennonite groups of America and abroad. The number of periodical publications is constantly increasing and only occasionally does a merging of two take place. This means that many Mennonite homes receive a number of papers with some overlapping in purpose and content, and that the circulation of most of the Mennonite periodicals is so small that they must be subsidized in addition to the income from subscriptions. This is particularly the case with publications which do not solicit advertising which as a rule cheapens and lowers the standard of a magazine. Nevertheless, the large secular magazines derive most of their income from advertising. Many of the ads not only lower the standards from a purely esthetic point of view, but also offend our ethical and religious concepts. And yet we as Mennonite readers expect that our papers without these "cheap" ads, which fill the treasury of the secular and commercial magazines, should be available for the same price. In order to meet this competition our Mennonite papers, particularly *Mennonite Life*, adjust their subscription price, not to the actual cost of the production of the periodical but to the price of those publications with a large circulation in which the major income is derived from advertisements. This means that almost all Mennonite publications are heavily subsidized from other sources.

Our readers will easily understand that *Mennonite Life* must be classed with the more expensive magazines because of the careful preparation of materials necessary for its production, the quality of paper used and the many illustrations which are quite expensive. In addition to this it is necessary to use extensive publicity to retain the old readers and add new ones. All this clearly indicates that *Mennonite Life* has been heavily subsidized from its start to the present. Fortunately its publisher, Bethel College, has been willing thus far to carry this burden in considering it an educational outreach beyond classroom teaching with the aim of serving its constituency and the Mennonites in general.

Should it not be possible under these conditions to make *Mennonite Life* self-sustaining? We hope it can be done! It is up to the readers of *Mennonite Life* and the Mennonite constituency as a whole to safeguard the future of this publication. How can this be done? One suggestion is for friends of *Mennonite Life* to create an endowment fund which would balance income and expense of *Mennonite Life*. But as long as we do not have this solution of the problem we urge our readers and friends to support the magazine in the following manner:

1. Renew your subscriptions promptly when you find your expiration slip in the magazine.

2. Encourage friends, relatives and neighbors to subscribe to *Mennonite Life*.

3. Give *Mennonite Life* subscriptions as a gift at special occasions.

With your help it can be done! Read carefully the enclosed publicity sheets and act now!

Respectfully,

The Publishers and Editors

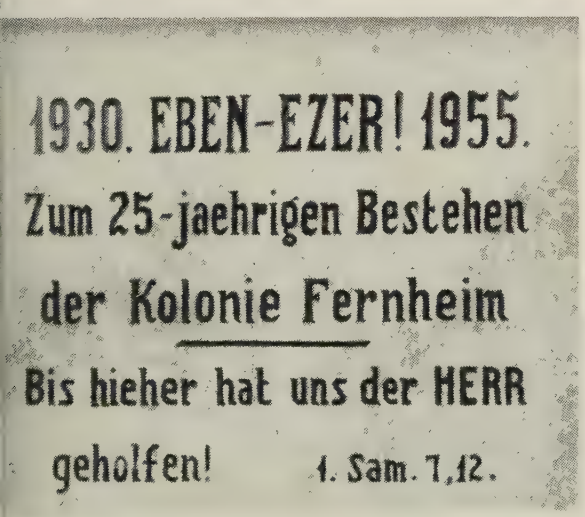
wenty-Five Years, Fernheim

BY HENRY H. EPP

THE spring of 1930 the slumbers of the Gran Chaco were disturbed anew, this time not by pioneers fleeing the pleasures and demands of civilization, but ilgrims aweary of strife and persecution, leaving nd a *Heimat in Flammen*. When on July 1, 1930, elected representatives of the settlement christened new haven of rest *Fernheim* they were paying vell tribute to the home of their fathers; they were lifting grateful hearts to God for the new home *er Ferne*.

n the words of the Oberschulze Heinrich Duerksen oming 1500 guests, the anniversary services were ecall some of the tragic and difficult, but even so, the messages and reports were to portray mir- ous help in time of need, success against heavy joys and blessings—all to the glory of God.

low photographs and displays and reports cannot pture forced separations and heart-rending fare- before the gates of Moscow, nor the sighs and ers of relief when the Red Gate opened to free- in the West. Memories have faded to make shocked pointment when first setting foot upon Chaco soil but an unpleasant dream. Today history must be from the plaques of gravestones, from the sides ushlands' thorny resistance, from the faces of peo- Here you will find indelibly imprinted twenty- years of *Gotterleben* (experience with God).



Laying the first brick of Twenty-fifth Anniversary Memorial at Fernheim, Chaco, Paraguay.

To read and interpret and re-evaluate these imprints of time, the plans for the anniversary celebrations were laid.

Permit me to insert an item which will not surprise one mindful of Mennonite tradition. I am referring to a festival dinner prepared for the twice thousand guests by the ladies of the colony. This too was to be a monument of praise and thanksgiving. The noon hour meal was an opportunity to fellowship intimately recounting early experiences of desperate plight, lack of food supplies, unaccustomed eating habits of the South, and similar related topics. One could sense a spirit of peace and thankfulness pervading this informal fellowship. "It has not been this way all the time," remarked one pioneer, (was he thinking of brotherly fellowship or was he referring to starvation diets? I do not know, and did not ask.) "but God has never forsaken us."

Should anyone be planning a festival permit me to let you in on a few details concerning staff and menu. Seventy persons under the supervision of three ladies and two men assumed responsibility to prepare and serve the meal. Then, statistically—but to really appreciate the dinner you should have been there—the dinner added up to 7 steers, 5 pigs, 775 lbs. of flour, 175 lbs. of sugar, 80 lbs. of salt, 60 lbs. of mandioka (Kartoffel-Ersatz), 1550 eggs, 40 lbs. of coffee, and lard, cream and spices in smaller quantities. As usual our Mennonite hostesses had over-estimated the capacities of the guests. After 450 children (ages 12 and under) had feasted on Sunday the natives of the Chaco, Chulupi and Lengua Indians, were presented with the left-overs—the equivalent of 1½ steers.

You have heard of the unpredictable Chaco weather. It stayed true to form. Foreign, government, and East-Paraguayan guests were left stranded because of impossible flying conditions. Fortunately they could come in by ncon for the celebrations, but only after they had braved rains and heavy winds in Asuncion. It was to accomodate these guests that the services were postponed one day. Now this Saturday turned out to be a

Fernheim pioneer family heads 1955.

beautiful, pleasant day in the Chaco. It had been preceded by rains and Sunday morning rains set in again. What wonder that the hand of God was seen commanding winds and clouds to do His will and present Fernheim with ever more evidence that God is Lord of All.

Motto of the Anniversary was read by Oberschulze Duerksen: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good for his mercy endureth forever. They (that) cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them . . . and he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to the city of habitation. (These) men (should) praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psalm 107:6-8)

Jakob Isaak (GC) chairman of the Committee for Church Affairs in Fernheim (KfK) based the opening sermon on Scripture passages found in Deut. 32:7 and Col. 3:15 emphasizing the words: remember, meditate, give thanks ("Gedenke—Betrachte—Danke").

"Remember our arrival in untouched wilderness, far-removed from all culture, into thorny bushes that deprived us of an outlook into distant horizons. Remember the difficult beginnings: lack of sweet drinking water, problems of aclimatization, typhoid epidemic, Chaco-Bolivia war and threats of evacuation. What was it that strengthened us in those trying times? It was faith in God's providential guidance; confidence in the undergirding hand of the brethren of the North; peace of heart and mind after years of physical and mental oppresions; vivid memories of violence and enslavement, an Iron Curtain closed to relatives and friends forever . ."

At this moment in the address people were moved to bow in silence, hearts crying out to God not to forsake the loved ones behind the Iron Curtain.

"Remember droughts, grasshopper plagues, and insect pests: has God ever forsaken us? Never! Never a total crop failure. Remember the past year, when after six months of ceaseless calling upon God, the heavens opened and gave rains out of season, miraculously granting food for man and beast. We have been able to develop our economic and cultural life. And finally to God and to sacrificial pioneering of our fathers. These let us remember as a gift from God: oneness in spirit, the love and unity prevailing among citizens and between churches. Let nothing rob us of this heritage. Remember and give thanks unto God!"

This keynote address set tone and spirit and prompted a spontaneous prayer service. Each one of all these worshippers rose to speak audibly his own prayer of thanksgiving and confession.

Congregational singing is a cherished heritage. May we never take it for granted or neglect it. The first report "Flight and Rescue" gave testimony that a praise song "Der Herr hat Grosses an uns getan" had burst forth from overflowing hearts when the border had been crossed. This song and many others were sung during the course of the festivities giving praise unto God. A highlight of the services was the inspired singing of a mass choir of 100 voices. The numbers they sang included "Dies ist der Tag des Herrn," "Mennolied," "Auf Alders Flügeln getragen," A male chorus of elderly brethren sang the beloved Russian praise and prayer anthem "Me slawim Tjebja."

During the morning session reports were read by group leaders reviewing in brief summary, flight, camp-life in Germany, crossing the Atlantic, and arrival in the Chaco. If reporters were quite reserved playing up first impressions on the one hand, on the other they spoke out with unreserved admiration and gratefulness in describing Germany's and North America's share in making, by the Grace of God, these rescue and settlement operations possible. Names were mentioned time and again, persons representing government and church circles. God does give His church moments where it may witness the fruits of its labors. This memorial day should provoke us to greater stewardship faithfulness.

Following the noon-day meal everyone gathered about a veiled monument erected as a memorial, as an *Eben-Ezer*. "This memorial shall remind us of God's guidance, it shall prompt us to rely on God even more wholeheartedly in the days to come. This is an altar stones speak the language of God. Remember! Never forget!" These are the words of the Oberschulze dedicating the unveiled *Eben-Ezer* memorial.

Each side of the memorial has a plaque as a testimony to future generations. The front and back sides

Fernheim mass choir at Twenty-fifth Anniversary.

ast and west) have Spanish and German citation of Sam. 7:12. The south side symbolizes agriculture d industry, and the North, missions.

Guests of honor—the general of Chaco military es-blishments, official representatives of the Paraguayan vernment, MCC representatives, church and colony presentatives—addressed the assembly commending rnheim on its achievements and wishing for them easier and more successful future.

There followed more detailed progress reports by the administration, cooperative, industry, schools, and hospital. These remarked briefly on difficult beginnings, but quickly continued describing the developments of the past years and closed outlining plans for the future.

Friendly rays of a sinking sun guided meditative, yet happy, ever determined colonists to their humble homes. These are the lasting memorial to aggressive pioneering, courageous enterprise and initiative, tireless industry, and heroic faith!

"Go Ye Therefore . . ."

An Around-the-World Mission Tour

BY ANDREW R. SHELLY

Kindergarten during worship service at Miyakonojo, Japan.

O MAKE a 40,000-mile trip around-the-world majoring on Mennonite missions provides an unforgettable experience. Stopping in thirty ntries, our primary observations were made in five eral areas—Japan, Formosa, India, the Belgian Con-and Europe.

During the five months' journey we had the privi-e of visiting slightly more than a hundred mission-s of the General Conference Mennonite Church. In ition to these, we were able to call on another hun-d representing six other branches of Mennonites. ng our routes of travel we had contact with at t one hundred more missionaries of many societies denominations.

What are the impressions gained in a venture of this kind? To record some of these, dozens of pieces of paper were sent through the rolls of this typewriter. In this brief pictorial story it is not our aim to even write a summary report. This article is intended as a running account of the intense 150 days. Occasionally, evaluations will be given.

Threshing of rice of Kobe, Japan.

We departed from San Francisco on the morning of November 2. Our first stop was Hawaii "the crossroads of the Pacific." Originally intended as a rest stop, we found much of interest here. We observed many races living harmoniously. It was a special thrill to stand on the spot where Hiram Bingham, pioneer missionary to the Hawaiian Islands preached. It is said his first text was: "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy."

In crossing the International Date Line we lost a day—and it was Sunday. We spent three weeks in Japan. From the first moments at Tokyo airport to the last at Iwakuni they were packed with high experiences. To record impressions of the "rice world" in a few words is difficult. We saw the bicycles, the wooden shoes, the never-ending swarms of people (88,000,000 in an area the size of California with only 17 per cent inhabitable), rice fields, etc.

We travelled over 1,500 miles by rail. We were able

G. C. Mennonite missionaries learning Japanese, with Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Shelly and Harry M. Detwiler.

to observe something of Japanese life. Primarily we visited (Old) Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference mission fields. We also called on missionaries and church leaders of other groups.

It staggers one's spiritual sensitivity to realize that only one fourth of one per cent (1 out of 400) of the people in Japan claim to be Protestant Christians. About the same number claim allegiance to Roman Catholicism.

We observed mission work primarily on Kyushu Island—the southernmost island of the Japanese chain. With a population of thirteen million it is said there are only eighty missionaries. Our work is centered at five places. We were impressed with the fine start. We met a number of young Japanese Christians. Japan has a high literacy rate and education is very general so progress in church life can be expected to be rapid. Already six converts are in Tokyo studying for the ministry. We met two of these young men.

A high moment was a "middle-of-the-night" train visit with a seminary friend, Yuji Uno. He opened his heart as to the challenge of Japan. A wonderful man of God, he has experienced the terrors of war. No words that might be recorded can express our feelings as we stood on the "atom grounds" of Hiroshima. We saw the marker erected in memory of the seventy-eight thousand buried in one huge grave.

It is only a six-hour plane ride from Japan to Formosa. Arriving December 1 we had a very full seven days. Formosa, with a population of ten million provides a far greater challenge than its numbers would indicate. It is the headquarters of the overseas Chinese. We travelled by plane to Hwalien. Here we observed the amazing work of the Mennonite Central Committee. Under the direction of Dr. and Mrs. Roland Brown the hospital has been doing good work. Not only did we observe the healing of the body, but also a continuous witness by a Formosan evangelist to the spiritual needs of over one hundred a day from many villages. We had the privilege of a trip to visit Ami and Tyla tribes under the guidance of Pastor Wu.

Returning to Taipei, capital city, where we had the fellowship of Presbyterian missionaries, staying in their home, we went by train to Taichung, M.C.C. headquarters on the island. Here we saw the babies' home, orphanage and other phases of work.

Glen Graber, M.C.C. worker in the Far East for some years, was our personal guide throughout our stay in Formosa. We got a glimpse into the stature of the work M.C.C. has been doing in this area.

Next on the travel plan was four days in Hong Kong. Through the courtesy of Charles Reinbrecht, Lutheran missionary and personal friend of Harry M. Detwiler, our travel companion, we got a good insight into this British Colony. Here too is a great missionary challenge. A vivid experience was to go by boat taxi to a hillside and visit a refugee camp. Here we saw seven thousand people huddled on the side of the mountain—not able to go home and no place to go.

After a brief plane stop at the very modern airport in Thailand, we proceeded to Calcutta, India, arriving there 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 11. We were startled to see the great expanse of concrete. Walking across the airport we became aware of a hand waving and a voice calling. It was our friend S. T. Moyer, thirty-four years a missionary in India. After brief government formalities, we went to downtown Calcutta where we began to note the life of India.

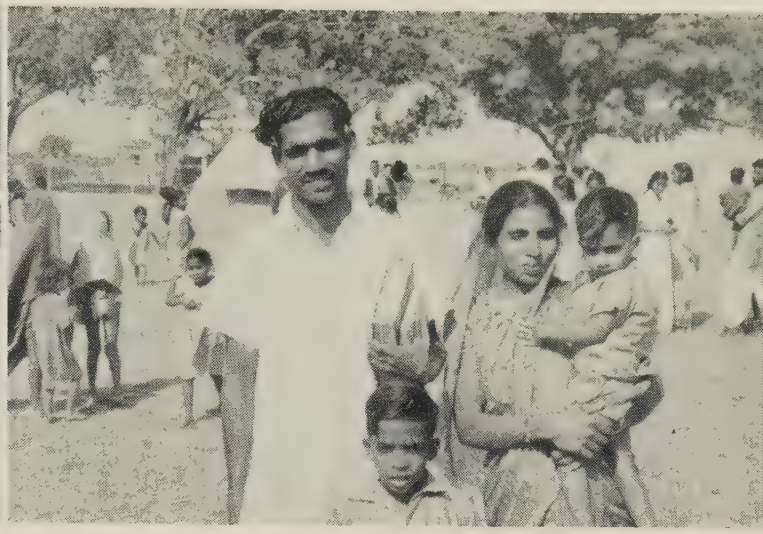
Sunday, December 12, we worshipped at Carey Baptist Church. The sermon was about witnessing and discipleship. Indians and Americans worshipped together. We were interested in seeing the plaques to the early pioneers. We found customs to be a bit different here. They brought us tea at 6 a.m. and we ate breakfast at 10 a.m. In the afternoon we went to Serampur to visit the place where William Carey worked. We saw his old pulpit, Bible, etc.

Then—that evening we began our overnight train ride to Raipur. What a crowd gathered at the Calcutta depot! And what noise! S. T. Moyer had things well arranged and we found our compartment for the night. Early in the morning we approached Champa. Our first glimpse of our mission station was gleaned as the speeding train passed the Christian Hospital grounds area. We saw handkerchiefs waving—the Baumans were at the wall.

At Raipur two girls came running down the station platform to meet us. They were Misses Sell and Moyer of the American (Old) Mennonite mission at Dhamtari. Now began the two-hour ride to their mission station where dinner was awaiting us at the home of the Edwin Weavers. And this introduced us to a two-day whirlwind tour of part of their work, which culminated in a fellowship gathering with all the missionaries and the inspiration of our first hearing of "How Great Thou Art!" a song quite popular with our missionaries in India.

Returning to Raipur we were met by Jacob Giesbrecht of the G. C. mission and two Indian brethren. The

Converted leper girl weaving, India.



Phul Singh family, Mauhudih, India, native preacher.

ty-five mile trip to Jagdeeshpur on the hospital oulance was an interesting experience. A dramatic ment came when we approached a bridge and were that the other side represented the beginning of field. It gave one a peculiar feeling to realize that assumed spiritual responsibility for the people many rs ago.

What can one write about our days around Jagshpur? They were busy and wonderful. We went into the villages and saw something of native life. saw many things as they were in Bible times. We the oxen threshing, winnowing of the grain, the ter, silversmith, etc. We saw them come to the well draw water.

We saw the results of missions in the lives of the ans and the churches we visited. A very great aching thrill came Christmas morning when the deeshpur church was packed for the service. We erved the work of Sewa Bawan Hospital of which H. E. Dester has been the head for many years. We the Janzen Memorial high school in action.

The G. C. field in India divides itself geographically two areas—south and north. After ten days in the hern area, we moved north. Orlando Waltner took o Raipur where we boarded the train for Balispur. e we were met by Dr. and Mrs. H. R. Bauman.

verts of Mennonite missions serving as Christian teachers.

They took us to Champa and then began our visitation in this area. Again we went out in neighboring territory. We observed and participated in the ordination of an elder and the laying of a cornerstone for a new church. We attended a church wedding. We also visited the Christian Hospital and Bethesda Leper Home.

We went over to Janjgir and saw Union Bible School and Annie C. Funk Memorial primary and middle school in action. That evening the Janjgir church was packed. We found all along that although there are differences among people, there are also great similarities. It is indeed true that our God "hath made of one blood all nations for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). It was a privilege to fellowship with Indian Christians all along the way.

Our journey was a continual round of greetings and farewells. After a warm farewell we got on the train bound for Nagpur. Here we read with Indian passengers and had the opportunity of conversation. We visited Yoetmal Union Biblical Seminary. The (Old) Mennonites and the General Conference are two of eight actively cooperating groups.

No words can describe the importance of training native Indians for the work of the spread of the Gospel and the growth of the church. There were some sixty students. Martha Burkhalter was our representative on the staff and Weyburn Groffs represented the (Old) Mennonites.

After a few days in New Delhi we went on to Jordan. India is going forward. The government has a very aggressive policy for the development of the country. This writer believes the future of missions and the church in India is bright. Certainly there will be adjustments, but wonderful foundations have been laid.

What about the Holy Land? It came at the center of our trip. How suggestive; for indeed our Lord Jesus Christ is the center of missions. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). We spent a week in Jordan. Not only did we see places of Biblical interest, but also the

Cotton workers in Africa and the potter at his wheel.

wonderful work M.C.C. has been doing. Not only did we observe the need and work, but the marvelous "plus" was very evident. We saw bundles of clothing from many Mennonite communities and saw children fed with American Mennonite food, including raisins from Reedley, California.

From the Pyramids in Cairo, Egypt to our visit with Loren Nussbaums in Liberia, Africa, was a continual round of challenge. In Egypt, an Arab country, we learned something of the work among Moslem people. We visited the Bible Society and the Nile River Press.

Our first major stop in Africa was Ethiopia. Clayton Keener of the Eastern Mennonite Board met us at the airport. We had a time of wonderful fellowship with the missionaries. Being here over a Sunday we were privileged to serve in preaching at the English service and also in the afternoon at a missionary fellowship gathering.

We made a quick trip to Nazareth about sixty miles away and again we noted the marvelous way in which M.C.C. paved the way for mission work. We also saw something of the startling development in going through a Dutch sugar refinery. Some five thousand Africans are employed. This is located only eight miles from the location of the Nazareth mission.

After a brief stop in Kenya we went on to Tanganyika where we visited John Leathermans and missionaries of the Eastern Mennonite Board. We visited at three of their stations—Musoma, Shirati and Nyabasi. It was a spiritual thrill to be at Lake Victoria with its associations with the life of David Livingstone.

Our next stop was our main one for Africa—the Belgian Congo. We had sixteen days visiting the inter-Mennonite work of Congo Inland Mission. We traveled some two thousand miles visiting our fields. The Congo itself is about one-third the size of the United States with twelve million population. The size of the Congo Inland Mission is about the same as the state of Illinois with about seven hundred thousand people.

We visited many Congo villages and observed many phases of life. In going over the roads we had the privilege of observing much. We were fascinated by the ferries used to cross the rivers. At one place the ferry was out and instead of ten miles to our destination we went around another way over eighty miles of road.

The Congo Inland Mission works primarily among four tribes: Baluba, Bampandi, Bashilele, and Batshoke. Two primary languages are used—Kipenda and Tshuluba.

To participate in the Lord's Supper service was a never-to-be-forgotten experience. Indeed, we discovered all along the way that "we are one in Christ." "In Christ there is no east or west."

In the Congo one soon gets used to large numbers. The people have been responsive. The government has been cooperative. In the Congo Inland Mission field there are eighteen thousand church members. There are twelve thousand others who are converts but who have not as yet joined the church. Another ten thousand attend and are seekers but have not yet made a profession of Christ. We observed the work of seven different kinds of schools and we saw the hospitals in action.

In Africa, as well as other places, the missionaries have been using the "multiplication" policy rather than the "addition" method. All along the missionaries realized that they could not do the work alone. Today there are more than a thousand African workers.

In the Congo we saw—as at other places—the great challenge of literacy. Some have said that the printed page is the number one missionary challenge today. The world is rapidly becoming literate. In the Congo today forty out of every hundred children of school age are in school. At Charlesville we saw the printing presses operating. And in Leopoldville we saw the great LECO presses. This is an inter-mission project. No mission is large enough to answer the great need.

This is the golden decade for Christian missions and the Belgian Congo provides the greatest challenge in missions as far as open doors is concerned. We need not pray for an "open door" in the Congo but for grace and wisdom to go through.

Our final stop in Africa was a brief one in Liberia—a small independent country along the west coast. The Loren Nussbaums have been on loan to the American

e Society. He is very much interested in literature missions and we learned much in being with him. also met some of the missionaries.

Through Loren Nussbaum we saw the huge Fire- e Rubber Plantation where thirty thousand are loyed. We had a good talk with a Smith, former ionary, now educational director who says there is w field in missions. Christians from America ought ccept jobs in foreign countries. He referred to the derful opportunities presented to a worker at Fire- e to witness for Christ among fellow-workers.

n four weeks in Europe we touched ten countries. r very brief stops at Portugal and Spain, we spent days in Italy. We saw the usual places of interest. stay in Switzerland was valuable. Our main visit made at Basel. Here we saw something of the Eur- n Mennonite Bible School and the M.C.C. work in slation of Christian literature. Also, near Basel we d some of my wife's first cousins. Without warn- we walked in on them. I believe some had not rd of their American relatives for fifty years. ough some Mennonites near Basel we learned of r location.

Germany provided our most active European visit. narily we observed Frankfurt, Enkenbach, and lin. At Enkenbach we saw the work of the PAX . Again we discovered that so much more is in- ed than we ever realized. Here we were well taken e of by Milton Harder.

In Belgium we visited David Shank of the (Old) nonite mission and Earl Roths, en route to the gian Congo. At one meeting all Mennonite mission- s in Brussels came together. We had a fine time. vas a joy to preach morning and evening also. Here n we met an inspiring Christian—Louis Ahrens. is an airline employee with a wonderful testimony. n England we visited with the Leathermans and mans.

Holland was our final stop. We stayed at the M.C.C. lquarters. A final climax was our attendance at el Mennonite Church in Amsterdam for a bap- al service.

Native pastor and wife of a Congo mission church, Africa.

What are some of the lessons from a trip like this?

1. We have had a priceless privilege in receiving the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel came to us at great cost. It cost God his all. It cost Jesus Christ his all. Someone in the past had to bring it to our ancestors.

2. We are indeed "one in Christ." Racial and color difference do not mean very much.

3. A tremendous amount of work has already been done. We were startled at what we saw. We met hundreds of native Christians the world over.

4. The work of missions is a universal task. "Go ye" refers to Christians everywhere. For this reason we preached about missions in all areas.

5. We were impressed with the rapidly changing pattern of life around the world. The so-called backward peoples are awakening. The American Point Four Program is a big contribution. Culture is advancing rapidly.

6. The nations of the world are becoming independent. Already six nations in Africa are self-governing.

7. Other religions are experiencing a resurgence. Buddhism, especially, is pushing ahead. Next year is its 2,500 anniversary. Buddhists are having a two-year conference in Bangkok. Hinduism is reinterpreting its faith and life. Moslem is on the march.

nonite settlement, Enkenbach, Germany, established by PAX boys. Enkenbach Old People's Home with house parents.

8. Mennonites have made a tremendous contribution in missions. The number of missionaries we have in the field is far in excess of our numerical comparison. The quality of work has been good. Mennonites have stuck to the job and worked economically. Our missions have produced good results.

9. The M.C.C. story is an amazing one encircling the globe.

10. Opportunities which startle the imagination are presented to us. Too often the Christian church has been too slow in heeding the Lord's directives. Unmistakably the Lord is urging us to go forward in a new way in spreading His Gospel. Doors are open. The church has been established in many lands. We in America, with our privilege, must become active partners in the further spread of the Gospel and establishment of the church. "We are labors together with God." (I Cor. 3:9).

These are only a few of the many general impressions. The great Commission stands:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit;

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

A Personal Perspective on the Believers' Church Conference

BY ELMER EDIGER

FOR the first time in almost a hundred years the General Conference Mennonites called a special meeting to rethink and redefine their concept of the church and its implications for congregational and conference organization.

Approximately 135 delegates and visitors from the United States and Canada gathered for three days, August 23-25, 1955, in Chicago at the Mennonite Biblical Seminary. The delegates included conference and district officers, a delegate for every thousand members in each district, delegates-at-large, including missionaries, and others. Study papers in a 200-page book prepared in advance by twenty-one individuals served as the basis for the conference presentations and discussions.

As a distillation of this process of study and discussion a representative committee brought forth its "findings" for adoption by the delegate body. This statement, and the total report are to serve as the basis for follow-up discussions and studies in congregations and districts. They will also be considered further by the executive committee and the General Conference itself. The ultimate test of the study conference, however, is what the congregations will do as the result of this total experience.

To many members in the home congregations there may have been an obvious value for representatives to wrestle with various problems dealing with specific discipline questions, the terms of ministers, the task of deacons and the like. But to some members it was not equally clear why there should be so much talk and writing about the "believers' church." "Certainly we all believe in it, don't we?"

From Brotherhood to a "Country Club?"

The central question of the study conference was just this, "Is our goal actually the 'brotherhood' church?" The brotherhood church seeks a membership clearly based on personal acceptance of Christ and a life of discipleship. It endeavors to be a personalized fellowship of worship, brotherly love, and redemptive discipline. Every member is to be a vital witness.

The fundamental issues become more clearly focused when we note that the opposite extreme is more like a "glorified country club." Thus Franklin H. Littell characterized the modern Protestant church where anyone can be baptized and become a member by signing a card, having his name read, and a hearty handshake by the pastor. He remains a member as long as he is socially and culturally compatible. This tends also to characterize the watered-down meaning of membership and fellowship in the "parish" or territorial church, the "state" church, and the *Volkskirche*.

Surely our Mennonite churches are not "country clubs" or the *Volkskirche?* On the surface our congregations have in varying degrees mixtures of the brotherhood and *Volkskirche* characteristics. Based on underlying goals and tendency of direction each congregation is primarily one or the other.

To say that "John White" does not have a "Mennonite" name indicates our tendency to confuse the cultural *Volkskirche* with the "believers" church. Or if our congregation has relaxed in most moral expectations of members and in most efforts at internal discipline then we too have the traits of the all-inclusive "state church" and perhaps for similar underlying reasons.

If our members think and act primarily as individual members of the large church on the corner we have already lost the personalized community of brotherly love and mutual concern. If "church" means largely the attending of a ritual of worship at a sacred place, then our concept of church is closer related to that of a

Group attending Believers' Church Conference, Chicago, Illinois. During a session of Study Conference.

ne than to a brotherhood fellowship. If our con-gation avoids an unpopular Christian stand in the mmunity it, like the "state" church, is really endeav-g to be at one with the world, rather than the body he suffering Christ. If there is doubt among mem-s that the congregation has a saving message in the ghborhood or in the world, or if there is a feeling at those outside the church are as polite and decent those inside" then the congregation has already lost sense of divine mission and given up the vision of a evers' church.

After the conference discussions once began no doubt nained as to whether the central question of the con-ence was vital or not. Even the din of the discussions the bus en route to meals indicated how deeply the neral Conference is involved in the conflict between brotherhood and the "state" type of church.

Gap Between Vision and Actual

But why did this question of the believers' church ne to the fore now? During the past several decades he General Conference there had been an increasing areness of the New Testament and the Anabaptist on of the church on the one hand, and on the other increasing realization that many of our congrega-s were heading in another direction. Consciousness his gap between vision and actuality made a "facing to the situation necessary unless we are content to t away from the brotherhood church goal.

To account for the growing interest in the New Tes-ent vision and mission of the church we must credit activity of some of our college leaders, various schol-of Anabaptism, the Menno Simons Lectureship, C activities, evangelistic movements, and in more nt times we must certainly recognize the crystalliz-influence of our Mennonite Seminary.

As a contributing factor we must also recognize the l Christian climate of the past two decades. The first or theological call for American churches to repent e in the thirties from Pauck, Miller and Niebuhr, *Church Against the World*. Since that time many ern church leaders have sought to make us aware the church is in danger of becoming so much like secular society that it will soon have no divine mes-and mission.

Trends toward secularization within the General Conference have been pointed out in the studies of S. F. Pannabecker, Robert Kreider, and others. New publication ventures such as the *Mennonite Life* have made significant contributions along these lines.

In this study conference there was no apparent effort to represent the various influences and schools of thought and training that have in recent years influenced our brotherhood. In the process of seeking the Biblical goal for the church we opened the Scriptures, and we studied the experience of the Biblical concern in the history of the church. Could it be that in a real sense there was a converging and blending of various efforts toward revitalizing our churches under the Lordship of Jesus Christ?

Eden Conference a Forerunner

The need for a study conference on the church was crystalized at the Eden Peace Study Conference held near Moundridge, Kansas, in 1953. Challenging questions at that time were: How did the early churches lose their close adherence to the belief and practice of love and nonresistance? and what will it take to revitalize and maintain this principle? Obviously the discussions repeatedly ran into questions on the concept of the church. Were we still serious about promoting a believers' brotherhood or were we satisfied to shift gradually toward a loose Protestant church concept?

The actual suggestion for a study conference on the concept of the church came from one of the Eden discussion groups, was endorsed by delegates as a whole and authorized by the Executive Committee of the General Conference.

The Eden conference, however, is also significant in

Findings' Committee during Believers' Conference, Chicago.

understanding the Chicago conference in that it introduced the study conference technique to our conference. This procedure gave us a clear definition of the problem, a carefully prepared atmosphere of worship, a commitment to brotherly love and thus a calm approach to an area in which there were genuine differences.

An Experience of Christ in Our Midst

Many of us have said "that was a good conference." If this simply implies a good feeling about the papers, discussion, and conference organization then we may or may not choose to follow these "good ideas." On the other hand, if it was a genuine experience of Christ in our midst then we will feel compelled to consider carefully the implications of this conference for our church life.

As the disciples on the Emmaus road, many of us can look back on certain aspects of the study conference and say "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road?" We think of the deep undertow of need that brought forth this conference. Was it not the Holy Spirit that drove us? We recall the vital discussions on the bus and in the organized groups. Did not the growing understanding of the biblical brotherhood church become a new constraint upon us? We reflect on how often even in points of difference there was a loving sensitivity. In worship our hearts were moved together in Christ through hymns, the word, personal expressions of praise, and in prayer. Let us thank God for the promise of His presence and for this confirming experience.

Obviously we did not all agree in the discussions and we all sensed areas of differences. Nevertheless with this experience in common many of us will know more deeply than ever before our oneness under the divine Lordship of Christ. How did this happen? There was a mutual respect for the honesty and sincerity of each others' Christian convictions. There was a willingness to be confronted with biblical truth. Then trusting each other we felt more free to accept and to admit our true condition.

How compelled we feel to move forward in obedience after Chicago will depend upon how we personally acknowledge this experience. How will others not at the conference feel led to move forward? Will it not depend also on the same general process of searching the Scripture, self-examination, and the readiness to obey the leading of our Lord?

Direction for Our Congregations

From the study conference comes a renewed accent on the congregation as the church "Where Christ is, living and reigning, in the midst of his gathered people." This is not to push aside the need for the association and service through the conference. But where "his people gather" regularly there resides the center of responsibility for the body of Christ and the total gospel. This conference did see dangers in the independence of congregations and saw the necessity for assistance and counsel in this area. Yet the delegates found the principle that final responsibility should reside in the congregation under the Lordship of Christ to be sound.

From this study conference comes also a renewed testimony that each congregation should strive to be a true brotherhood to loving, disciplined and missionary-minded believers. What guidance is offered for our congregations which are removed in varying degrees from the spirit and practice of such a brotherhood church? The findings report gave helpful suggestions.

True to our concept of the priesthood of all believers individual members are called to "talk up" their concern for the right direction. The nature of this study conference itself would seem to illustrate that with an atmosphere of worship and careful preparation individual congregations can conduct a helpful study which will lead toward a stronger sense of Christ in their midst and a clearer witness for him. This study conference held forth hope that the New Testament brotherhood can still emerge within congregations which have become traditional and compromised.

If, however, the whole congregation does not offer the intimate fellowship one needs, then what? This study conference implied but did not probe deeply into the possibility of "smaller fellowship groups within the larger fellowship." This is a possibility with dangers. To be helpful to the total congregational life such a kindred group must have a strong spirit of self-examination, a desire for helping others in their individual weaknesses, an openness and relatedness to the church as a whole so that it feeds back into the larger congregation. If the spiritual fellowship of "two or three" is essential for our weaknesses, necessary to confirm our strengths, and essential to experience the living Christ, then there must be a way to provide for it and within the congregation if possible. We cannot help recall, however, that it was such following of the biblical vision of the church which pushed Anabaptists finally to form new congregations.

The question of discipline came to the floor early in the conference—from those who saw it as a must for the brotherhood church and from those who saw discipline as the downfall of brotherhood love. From many of the discussions and in the findings it became clear that "stricter discipline" is not the place to begin revitalization for a brotherhood church. Rather, the basic discipline arises from the fellowship of mutual concern in which there is strong personal interaction. On such a broad base of formative and preventive discipline, corrective discipline is also necessary and can more readily become redemptive.

Direction Beyond the Congregation

With the renewed emphasis on congregational responsibility and the fear of "form" there was also an apparent appreciation and confidence in the role of the conference within certain limitations. The Conference

trict and general, is encouraged to be a vehicle by ich inter-congregational exchanges are encouraged, l a medium for searching for standards such as are sible in this study conference. The Conference is an epted method whereby congregations can serve themves.

Although there seemed to be very little inclination shift more of the ultimate authority to the Conferce there seemed to be a real desire that the Conferce also feel responsible to see that the work and the ndards of the churches are realized. Counselling with given congregation as suggested in the findings would t rest on ultimate power of excommunication but ther on the moral rightness of the cause. This study nference itself urged further study and guidance in e field of Christian experience, nurture, evangelism, e question of discipline and the work of deacons.

In addition to encouraging official Conference action suggested above there also seemed to be a spontanus interest in more inter-congregational deputations. is would be not solely for fellowship but particularly witness for Christ through special concerns arising t of the congregational group. This could be on varis levels and involve to various degrees of district conence encouragement and organization.

By concentrating on problems there might tend to be the impression that we were only aware of General Conference weaknesses. Clearly this was not the case. In fact, the unity in the Spirit, the goal and the taste of brotherhood vitality at this study conference gave feelings of Christian strength. Furthermore we must be reminded that there are wide variations of strength and weakness among our congregations and each must be evaluated separately.

History seems to be strongly weighted against the possibility of restoring the brotherhood church once it has become a *Volkskirche*. Historically the trend has largely been away from brotherhood features. This, no doubt, has led individuals who favor the brotherhood goal to assume it is "too late." There are among us, however, those who have hope. Progress has been made in the last decades from the more traditional and secular ways toward New Testament brotherhood vitality in congregational and Conference life.

In any case this conference clearly proclaimed that there is hope for those congregations who "are prepared courageously to place Christ central" and to have an essential fellowship and discipline; who are willing to undergo "vigorous self-examination" and be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

BELIEVERS' CHURCH CONFERENCE
August 23-25, 1955
A Digest of the Lectures

Introduction

THE STUDY Conference of the Believers' Church held in Chicago, Illinois August 23-25, 1955, was a unique event in the history of the General nference Mennonite Church and possibly among the nnonites of America as a whole. To say that this bject had previously found no consideration would be true although much more attention should have en paid to it in view of the fact that it is one of the sic doctrines of New Testament Christianity and the toric Mennonite church. In the days when Mennoes were "peculiar people" separated from the world was more or less taken for granted that they were her the church of Christ or an essential part thereof. nes have changed. In our days the Mennonites are so "peculiar" anymore nor so certain as to what stitutes a true Christian church. For this reason Conference was unique and is worth imitating. tricts, communities, and congregations should arge similar Study Conferences for a weekend or a ies of evening meetings on a smaller scale. Copies the printed lectures etc., of the *Study Conference on the Believers' Church* can be ordered at $1.50 from the General Conference Headquarters, 722 Main Street, Newton, Kansas.

It was indeed an inspiring and educational event when over one hundred leaders and representatives of the Conference discussed subjects pertaining to the church of Christ. There was no lack of interest and the discussion groups were very lively and stimulating. If there is one criticism permissable it is probably this, that the discussion in study groups neither systematically followed the outline and the thought content of the lectures nor the topics presented by the chairmen of the discussion groups. The whole Conference was characterized by a spontaneous and a very free entering into the discussion of subject matter presented in general. But it was not in the full sense of the word a disciplined systematic study as the name of the Conference suggests. This could indicate two things. First, that we are not accustomed to systematic studies and second, that the questions pertaining to this subject were of such interest that all participants spontaneously entered the discussion which was continued throughout the meetings

and even in the bus to the cafeteria and around the table without much regard to the lectures and outlines presented.

The following paragraphs represent selections from the various lectures which were given at the Study Conference and served as a basis for the discussion during the three days. It is hoped that they will stimulate the thinking on this subject in larger circles and that the complete set of lectures with reports and findings will be ordered for furher study, challenge and inspiration. At the end of each quotation the page of the *Study Conference* book from which it was taken is given.

The Church in the Bible

In a profound sense the infant church was "the fellowship of the Risen Lord" and "the community of the Holy Spirit." Thus we would hold that the call and instruction of the disciples as well as the crucifixion were preparatory to the actual historical founding of the church, whose real "birthday" is probably best designated as Pentecost.

What, then, were the constitutive elements? In the earliest stages it is clear that these were not organizational or even primarily confessional. The church did not begin with an organization meeting to elect a chairman or to appoint a few committees, neither with a session to adopt an acceptable "confession of faith" (p. 25).

Without doubt the most potent concept concerning its own nature which under Divine inspiration came to the early church was that it is the body of Christ. This powerful figure is first presented in I Cor. 12:12-27 where the emphasis is on the interdependence and the ideal harmonious functioning of the various members of the body. It recurrs in Colossians 1:18, 24 and in Ephesians 1:22 and 5:23 where it then leads readily into its cognate metaphor of the church as the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:23-32) (p. 26).

To describe the nature of the church in its vertical relationship, it is variously called "the household of God," "the body of Christ," and "the fellowship of the Spirit." Essentially these expressions lift up two basic ideas, namely (1) that the church is a community (household, body, fellowship) and (2) that it is Divinely constituted (God, Christ, Spirit) (p. 28).

As the community of discipleship, however, the church consists of a certain *kind* of people. These are true Christian disciples each of whom bears a personal faith-love relationship to Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord. Thus the church is the "household" which seeks to carry out every wish of the Father (God); it is the "body" responsive to every instruction of its head (Christ); it is the "fellowship" of those who share the life and power and illumination of the Holy Spirit. It is thus a *believers'* church (p. 29).

Theologically, it is God's community of grace and discipleship, the fellowship of "sinners saved by grace" but also the community of "the saints striving after holiness." It is Christ's "imperfect body" yet it is also to be His "holy bride." Thus it is the disciplined church earnestly seeking to be a holy church (32 f).

From the very first the affectionate term of "brethren" was employed in reference to those who belonged to the Christian society. The *koinonia* (fellowship) takes its places in the meetings of the church side by side with the apostles teaching and the breaking of bread and prayers. The term for "church," *ekklesia,* with its meaning of "the called out assembly," itself suggests such a communion. Adolph Deissmann, in his monumental work, *Light From the Ancient East,* considers our own German term *Versammlung* to be one of the most faithful translations of *ekklesia* (p. 82).

The individual church must come to the realization that as an association of believers it is an image of the universal church, and that in its assemblies its members are to find a perpetual reminder that they are members of a divine body (p. 86).

The Anabaptists and the Biblical Church

As Luther's central concern was to find God through "faith alone" and Zwingli and Calvin aimed to do the will of the sovereign God so did the Anabaptists have a focal point from which they viewed God, man, sin, salvation, worship, and the relationship of man to man. This chief concern was the realization of the Believers' Church or the body of Christ. The New Testament *ecclesia,* meaning a gathering of sinners called out of a world of sin and doom through Christ Jesus, was their ideal. This *ecclesia* is sometimes also referred to as Noah's Ark which safely brings the redeemed through a world flooded by sin to the shores of eternal life.

From the writings of the sixteenth century Anabaptists in Switzerland, Germany, and The Netherlands we receive the overwhelming impression and conviction that they were *ecclesio-centric,* that is church centered. This implies that for them the Church of Believers was basic and significant. Their views on other aspects of salvation such as sin, regeneration, Christian living, etc., were influenced by their concept of the church.

They were fully convinced of the depravity of man and his need for salvation through Christ. Those saved from sin and eternal doom through the regenerative act of God in Jesus Christ had become children of God and members of the church of Christ. They were challenged from day to day through the Word of God in fellowship with each other to demonstrate the new life to which they were called (p. 47).

The church is a creation of God through Jesus Christ resulting from the salvation of man who is a sinner and faces eternal doom. The church is present where Christ's redemptive act is experienced and where on this basis fellowship with Christ exists among fellow believers (p. 48).

General Conference and the Biblical Church

s the New Testament church emerged out of the Testament covenant, and as the Anabaptist church out of formalized Catholicism and contemporary way Reformation, even so the Oberholtzer awaken- leading to the organization of the General Confer- grew out of formalized American Mennonitism ; with the contemporary American spiritual revival 1).

he local congregation must be free and autonomous hat it may move to some mountain of transfigura- or to some upper room at Pentecost." Nicolas yaev is reported to have said that "freedom is a en rather than a right, a source of tragedy and d pain." Freedom is not only to be free *from* thing, but also to be free to something. This in- s duty and responsibility (67 p.).

characteristic of the General Conference Mennon- hurch is a spirit of dynamics or ability to change. out this quality the New Testament church could ave survived with its Hebrew origins, and develop- n a persecuting Graeco-Roman culture. Without quality the Anabaptists could not have survived in ace of fire and dungeon (p. 71).

n the last century the General Conference Men- es have undergone many changes. But change for ake of change is fruitless. To be meaningful change be undertaken in the light of some real goal and elevant to present and future needs. The past is rtant but the present and future are more im- nt (p. 78).

here is no question but that the lack of common and methods makes it difficult to carry out our rams of education, publication, peace, missions, other activities of the church. Yet we prize our regational form of government and our freedom, we are reluctant to take chances on a more cen- ed control. How can we produce harmony between various districts and churches without doing vio- to our congregational principles? It is doubtful her congregational freedom can be absolute and maintain a working group. It seems to the writer a matter of the degree of centralized authority and regational freedom, rather than that either be ute.

should be pointed out here that centralized au- ty is of greatest danger when that authority is perpetuating. That was the case when the authority d with bishops who served for life and had an rtant hand in the choice of those who were added heir number. Centralization of authority is less erous when it is periodically subject to review by onstituency itself. If we move toward centralization thority, we must be sure that this safeguard of dic review is maintained (110f).

reater care (should be exercised) in taking church- to the conference and individuals into the churches who are not loyal to our aims and purposes. There are many other church groups that do not have these unique aims and objectives. Closing the door to entry into our own church does not close the doors of the kingdom against these individuals and churches (p. 115).

A check of the whole General Conference (in the U.S.A.) for the last triennium 1952 through 1954 was made.... At the beginning of 1952 there was a total membership of 35,772, and 11,871 children not members. Three years later the report showed a membership of 35,856, and 12,963 children not members. The net increase for these six districts, with 188 churches, in three years was—84 members. Increase in children not members reported—1092. This means a net gain of less than ½ member (.44 to be exact) per church for the three-year period. Is there any cause to be disturbed about this lack of growth so far as these six districts are concerned (p. 178)?

How does this "brotherhood" perpetuate itself? If the initial joining in this fellowship was on the basis of a vital experience with Christ, how could the "second generation" enter into this fellowship?

My answer to this would be, that if it is to be more than mere form, ritual or a traditional acceptance, it must be on the same basis as that which the first generation experienced: a genuine conversion to Christ which results in a new life (p. 173).

Church Discipline

In an ideal situation the act of discipline is always motivated by love which seeks to win the sinner and restore the spiritual body of Christ to its normal health. Later history, however, shows that it was at this point where the Mennonites demonstrated their greatest shortcomings in their attempt to establish the true church of Christ. Not always was their zeal for the church matched with the love for Christ and their fellow men (p. 50).

For a church to exercise discipline for deviation from tradition is a farce and a misapplication of the Scriptures, reminiscent of the Pharisees and of Calvin's Geneva. But for a church to exercise discipline upon the basis of scriptural teaching and authority is obedience to the command of the Lord. It is only on this high level that church discipline can become, under the leading of the Spirit, a divine method to both purify and redeem the body of Christ (p. 88).

It should be clear from a careful study of the Scriptures that the doctrine of discipline includes much more than the dismissing of an offender from the brotherhood. To discipline means to educate, to guide, to mold. In defining the New Testament word *paideia* for discipline, Thayer includes in it (a) "the whole training and education of children . . . employing for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment," and (b) "whatever in adults also cultivates the soul, especially by correcting mistakes and curbing the passions; hence instruction which

aims at the increase of virtue . . . chastisement." This definition indicates that a vital phase of discipline is preventative or "formative." To punish Christians for failing to heed something they have never been taught is neither democratic nor Christian. It is here that instruction in doctrine and conduct becomes important before members are admitted into the fellowship (p. 91f.).

Sin has deep roots and a mere trimming or cutting off of impurity from time to time will not cure it. The source of sin must be overcome through renewed emphasis upon Christ-centered living arising out of a personal experience with Him. "And be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2) must be interpreted for young and old alike in terms of daily living.

The church must again become a fellowship of the redeemed. It must be a warm fellowship. Its members must again become *brothers and sisters in the Lord.* It must be a responsible fellowship of love and concern one for the other. It must become a holy fellowship which through its very existence constantly confronts all men with their sinfulness and leads them to repentance (p. 95).

We must again as a church of Christ become bold enough to exercise redemptive discipline through which sin and evil are extricated in order that the sinner may be saved. We need a larger measure of zeal and love for the lost and erring to make this possible. We have seen that our forefathers did not always have the love to match their zeal. Simply to reduce the zeal without an increase of love does not solve the problem nor mark any progress (p. 55).

Cooperation and Ecumenicity

The largest venture in Mennonite cooperation is, of course, the Mennonite Central Committee. It is designated "large" because of the wide range of its ministry, the broad variety of its services, the number of people involved and the generous financial support (p. 138).

It is clear that Mennonite cooperation to date has been pretty much in the area of "works." Has the time come for Mennonites to move beyond this stage and explore ways of cooperation in the realm of theological understanding and mutuality? This approach is not entirely new. The Winona Lake Peace Study Conference and the venture of preparing Sunday school materials together are efforts along this line (p. 140).

Having come out of periods of conflict and division we have been very careful to perpetuate our differences. We have passed on to our children an emotional prejudice which often makes cooperative activities impossible.

There is little evidence of a spirit of repentance or a sense of guilt over differences that have divided the fellowship in times past. The burden of past actions, we feel, does not fall on us. We resort rather to a complacent rationalization of the present status without a genuine desire to re-evaluate past actions or the present situation and without a conscious effort at reconcilliation.

We have never sufficiently clarified our doctrine of the church to feel the necessity and the compulsion for inter-Mennonite cooperation. We have had common interests, great leaders, and considerable experience in inter-Mennonite work, but we have as yet not caught the vision of interdenominational cooperation (p. 145).

We should know clearly what we as a church stand for and why, especially with reference to our teaching of the church as a voluntary fellowship of regenerated people, the Bible as the true and only foundation for our faith, and our duties as disciples of Christ (p. 151).

We should be ready always in all humility to re-examine our principles and practices open-mindedly in the light of Scripture, so as to avoid denominational prejudice and dogmatic bigotry.

We should never sacrifice truth in favor of unity. We should be more concerned about the survival of our ideals than the survival of ourselves or our church.

Without compromising with or yielding to error we should be willing to allow others the freedom of conscience that we desire for ourselves (p. 152).

The Mennonite church can consort or affiliate with the larger ecumenical bodies to the degree that it can maintain its own essential integrity and Christian witness (p. 158).

The Believers' Church Today

Our forefathers were alarmed about the fact that the church of their day had become institutionalized, formalistic, and ritualistic, lacking the basis for worshiping and serving God in spirit and in truth. Every church and denomination, regardless of its glorious past and its foundation on the rock against which the gates of hell will not prevail, is nevertheless constantly in need of critical self-examination in regard to its foundation, direction, and function as a church of Christ in the light of the Gospel (54 f.).

We must recapture in our day the vision and mission pertaining to the establishment and maintenance of the Believers' Church which our forefathers based on a Christ-centered reading of the Bible. This cannot be a blind and thoughtless imitation but must be derived from a study of the Scriptures and must be meaningful in our time.

We must again . . . learn to appreciate the value and significance of a church which functions as a disciplined body of believers in Christ in which each member is willing to pay the price of discipleship to witness for the Lord at home and abroad in daily living. We must regain the conviction that the practice of the priesthood of all believers, by which every member shared Christ's salvation with those inside and outside the fold, is vital in every congregation (p. 55).

To urge churches and ministers to make more of the Scriptures is restating an axiom that is hear

and again and perhaps leaves little impression any
Yet in the present trend of Protestantism to a
to the Bible and the appreciation of its reliability
s authority we must again sit up and take notice.
rd Luccock has said, "Without the Bible, the
ner is truly a displaced person, a refugee from his
country." "We are not called upon to be prestitors, but interpreters and heralds, rightly—that
nestly—dividing the word of truth."
herefore, there is need even in our churches with
ackground for more expository preaching of the
that will meet the everyday problems of life and
constantly keep the Bible before us. We need
ress the great truths of the Scriptures, the comments, and God's wonderful love to us as revealed in Jesus Christ for our own closer walk with Him. In our day of such biblical illiteracy we need to encourage the use of the Scriptures in the pew, the Sunday school, and the home (p. 182 f.).

If each believer is vitally joined to Christ, the head, and the church of His body, then all believers must also stand in a living relation to each other. This characteristic, a deep love for one another, is seen from the church's very beginning. Our fellowship today cannot be based upon mere conviviality like that of a luncheon club. It deserves far more support than any service organization. Its one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord. Its fellowship is founded upon the New Covenant between God and man, and man and man, of which Jesus Christ is the permanent mediator (p. 183).

Why I Am a Mennonite

BY MRS. EMRY A. RUTH

AM a Mennonite—born, bred, and convinced.

To some people, such a statement might be considered tantamount to admitting that I am provincand bigoted. The Mennonite denomination is small, s often misunderstood and sometimes ridiculed.

nce Mennonites do not usually proselyte (largely se of their respect for the religious convictions of s), most church members are "born" Mennonites. ugh four centuries of intermarriage among a few red thousand people, the Mennonites have become urch "family" rather than purely an ecclesiastical . This is in itself no virtue, and has sometimes considered a drawback; but is nevertheless a defcharacteristic of most Mennonites.

or Mennonite young people growing up in the prehantly Mennonite communities in America, there ually little reason to examine the faith critically mparison with other denominations; but when people leave the rural atmosphere of a Mene community and become teachers, physicians, ntants, skilled craftsmen, etc., as more and more em are doing, religious values are re-examined.

hat justification is there in remaining a member small denomination when all Christian churches wledge the same Saviour? What peculiar religvalues and attitudes toward life do I feel our en will absord in a Mennonite atmosphere? 't remaining "different" imply an un-Christian attitude of superiority in regard to other denominations?

These questions, and others like them, have influenced many Mennonite young people to join larger or "undenominational" churches when they move to the city. Wichita churches have absorbed several thousand of our people.

Why do a few hundred of us in Wichita remain Mennonites?

First, of course, there is the matter of family ties. About the year 1525 our forefathers in Switzerland and Holland began to upset "state church" doctrines of European Christianity. They believed in an open Bible with free interpretation for all; they adopted no written creed except the teachings of Jesus, especially as recorded in the Sermon on the Mount. They rebaptized adults as a symbol of their break with the state church system of automatic church membership through the baptism of infants, believing that the actions and the religious beliefs of the mature individual were the determining factors in salvation. Because of this, they were called Ana-baptists (Baptizing again) until 1544 when they were first referred to as "Mennists," after Menno Simons, who was their leader in northern Europe at that time.

As a result of these "heresies," our ancestors were cruelly persecuted by all state churches, and through the years many attempts were made to annihilate them. They refused to resist these attempts with armed force,

preferring rather to start life over in another country or province, usually by invitation from liberal rulers looking for honest, industrious settlers.

This insistence on individual freedom of religion and separation of church and state led directly to religious freedom as it is practiced in America today, through later contacts—in the 1600's—with European Baptists (John Smith, Thomas Helwys, and John Murton), Pilgrims (John Robinson, William Bradford), and Quakers (John Fox and William Penn). Each of these three denominations, in forming, adopted some of the teachings of the Mennonites and rejected others.

By believing the teachings of Jesus in their literal sense, the Mennonites for over four hundred years have emphasized the Gospel of love in their everyday life and in the training of their children; stressing an unaffected and uncomplicated way of living, and the inherent dignity of man as the supreme creation of God. They still do.

This love is what I believe to be the essence of the Gospel of Christ, and I am convinced that, in time the Mennonite emphasis on Christian love as the only solution for the world's ills will be accepted as universally as our interpretation of religious freedom has been. Indeed, it seems to me that religious freedom with its mutual tolerance and respect, is basic to real Christian love, and is only the first step to Christ-like living on a national scale.

I appreciate the heritage which members of my "church family" have preserved for me, often at great cost to themselves. In spite of the fact that there have been individual inconsistencies among Mennonites nevertheless the main theme for over four hundred years, and the official position of the Mennonite churches today is "Love for God, and love for neighbors" under the authority of Jesus, the Christ, the only Son of the living God.

That is why I am a Mennonite.

Warum Mennonit? Why Mennonite?

Von P. D. Willms

(Siehe Artikel von Jakob Sudermann, Juli, 1955, S. 142)

Wenn wir die Frage „Warum bin ich Mennonit?" beſprechen wollen, müßten wir erſt einmal etwas näher definieren, was wir unter „Mennonit" verſtehen.

Herr Sudermann ſchreibt: „We will make the arbitrary separation of secular from non-secular only to focus the better on the subject of this essay." Demnach müßten wir den Menſchen—und der Mennonit iſt ja auch ein Menſch—in dieſer Ausſprache nur als ein religiöſes Weſen anſehen, nur ſeine religiöſe Seite in Betracht ziehen.

Das Religiöſe iſt aber mit dem Völkiſchen in uns ſo enge verwoben, das ein Separieren derſelben, wenn auch nur zum Zwecke einer Diskuſſion, garnicht denkbar iſt. Auch der religiöſeſte Menſch kann ohne einen kulturellen Hintergrund auf die Dauer nicht beſtehen.

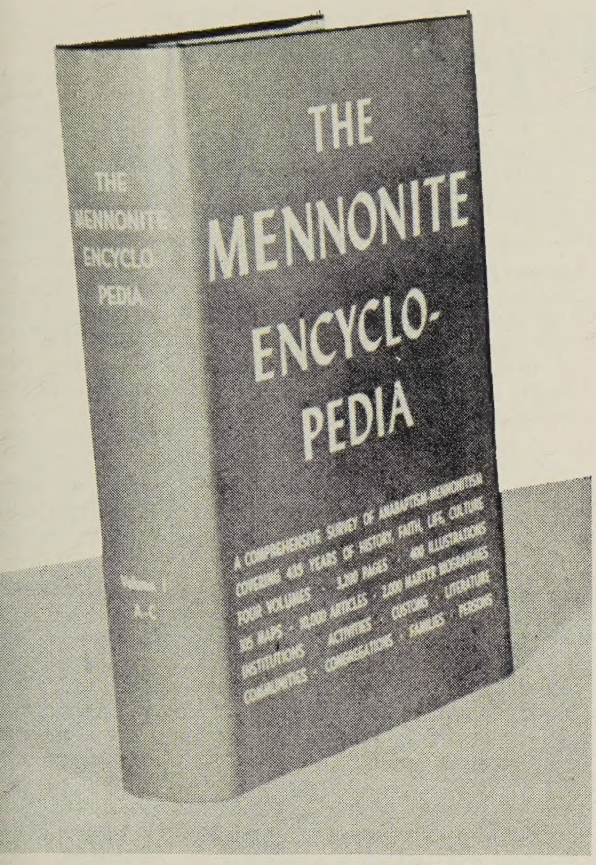
Ich, auch wohl die große Mehrheit der Mennoniten, haben einen deutſch-kulturellen Hintergrund. Wie verarmt wäre meine mennonitiſche Religion ohne die ſchönen und tiefen deutſchen Kinderlieder und Gebete, wie „Chriſti Blut und Gerechtigkeit," „Weiſt du wie viel Sternlein ſtehen an dem blauen Himmelszelt," „Müde bin ich, geh zur Ruh" uſw., ohne die gewaltigen deutſchen Choräle, wie „Ein feſte Burg iſt unſer Gott," „O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden," uſw., wie verarmt mein Gottesdienſt ohne die Kirchenmuſik und Kirchengeſang eines Bach, Beethoven, Handel, Mozart uſw. Das aber iſt alles deutſch-kultureller Hintergrund. Ich kann mir denſelben garnicht aus meiner Religion hinwegdenken.

Es hat dem lieben Gott in ſeiner großen Weisheit gefallen, mich in einer deutſch-mennonitiſchen Familie in dieſe Welt kommen zu laſſen. Meine Eltern gaben mir eine deutſch-mennonitiſche Erziehung und bis etwa 17 Jahren kann von einer „Wahl" kaum die Rede ſein. Hier gibt es kein „Warum?"

Ich denke, es wäre richtiger, wenn wir die Frage „Warum bin ich Mennonit" in zwei Fragen zerlegten, nämlich „Warum bleibe ich bei meinem mennonitiſchen Volk?" und „Warum habe ich mein mennonitiſches Volk verlaſſen?"

Mit einem kleinen Vorbehalt ſtimme ich mit dem was Herr Sudermann über die religiöſe Seite des Mennoniten ſagt überein. Man könnte faſt dasſelbe über ſeine völkiſche Seite ſagen. Unwillkürlich kamen mir beim leſen des Artikels Schillers Worte in den Sinn

An dein Volk, da ſchließ dich an,
das halte feſt mit deinem ganzen Herzen,
hier ſind die ſtarken Wurzeln deiner Kraft,
dort, in der fremden Welt, ſtehſt du allein,
ein ſchwankes Rohr, das jeder Sturm zerbricht.



Mennonite Encyclopedia

Volume I off the Press

BY CORNELIUS KRAHN

OLUME I of the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* has just come off the press. This event can be hailed as a great ievement in Mennonite research and publications. en completed the *Encyclopedia* will consist of four umes. The total of Mennonite history, beliefs, prac-s, congregations, settlements and events is treated oncise articles arranged in alphabetical order. Many os of settlements and countries illustrate the articles addition to forty-five pages of unique illustrations. ume I consists of 749 pages of double column articles includes the letters from A through C. Nearly 500 ters contributed the articles to the first volume.

The four-volume set will consist of 3,200 pages in ch will appear 10,000 articles with 400 illustrations over 100 maps. All known existing and extinct Men-ite congregations, institutions, organizatios, and lications are featured in separate articles. This is the case with countries, states, provinces, counties, es, and some towns and villages where Mennonites and have lived. The *Encyclopedia* will be the most plete source of information on all phases of history, ure, theology, and other aspects of Mennonite life in tence.

The forerunner of the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* was *Mennonitisches Lexikon,* edited and published by istian Neff and Christian Hege, Germany, about ch *Mennonite Life* reported in its first year (July, , 6 ff.). H. P. Krehbiel was the American represen-ve of the *Lexicon.* In 1945 a *Mennonite Encyclopedia* Committee was created consisting of C. Henry Smith, H. S. Bender, A. Warkentin, Cornelius Krahn, J. C. Wenger, and Robert Friedmann. This Committee worked out a plan through which the American *Encyclopedia* came into being. Two of the Committee members, A. Warkentin and C. Henry Smith, soon passed away. A special *Mennonite Encyclopedia* Publishing Committee came into being, composed of representatives of the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania; Mennonite Publication Office, Newton, Kansas; and the Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, Hillsboro, Kansas. This Publishing Committee, backed by the above-mentioned publishing houses, is the actual sponsor and publisher of the *Mennonite Encyclopedia.* The members of the Publishing Committee are: Paul Erb, A. J. Metzler, H. J. Andres, Abe M. Wiebe, Orlando Harms and P. E. Schellenberg.

All editorial work and responsibility rests with the Executive Committee of the Board of Editors consisting of H. S. Bender, Cornelius Krahn, and Melvin Gingerich. This Committee is assisted by the following Assistant Editors, who together with the Executive Committee constitute the Board of Editors: Ernst Crous, Robert Friedmann, P. C. Hiebert, C. F. Klassen, S. F. Pannabecker, J. G. Rempel, P. E. Schellenberg, J. C. Wenger, and N. van der Zijpp, and a larger Editorial Council, also consisting of representatives of all Mennonite conferences and groups of America and Europe.

Much time was spent during the first years in setting up machinery to create the best possible product. It was the aim that no subject of significance would escape the attention of the editors. After this, assignments were made to many writers; gradually the articles began to come in and the editorial work could begin. Again a careful plan of editorial efficiency and accuracy had to be worked out. Meanwhile, Mrs. H. S. Bender had started the translation of selected *Lexikon* articles which were brought up-to-date. The responsibility for the task of obtaining and editing all articles as well as the proofreading rests with the Executive Committee of the Board of Editors. Many of the articles are being written by its three members. Outstanding European

(Continued on Page 192)

Books in Review

The Doctrine of Love and Nonresistance by Harley J. Stucky, North Newton, Kansas: Author, 1955. 60 pp., $.50.

This booklet is presented under four divisions: Fanatic Jewish Nationalism; The Doctrine of Love and Nonresistance in its Historic Setting; The Christian Witness of the First Three Centuries; Reasons for the Decline of the Peace Witness. A good bibliography is also included.

The author seeks to place the doctrine of love into its historic setting. In this connection his study of political conditions in Palestine as found in the days of Jesus is very helpful. His study of the temptations of Jesus and other Scriptural passages is exegetically sound and incisive, and his classified listing of New Testament passages outside of the gospels both convenient and comprehensive. The "Christian Witness of the First Three Centuries" includes frequent reference to early Christian witnesses.

The final chapter is interesting and stimulating, though not exhaustive. As reasons for the decline of the peace witness are listed: the double standard of ethics with its concept of a "just" war; constant granting of concessions on the part of the Christian church; the union of church and state; the mass influx of pagan elements into the Christian church; and the institutionalizing of the idea of peace.

The booklet ought to be invaluable for young people's study groups; for sermon references, and for family reading in the home. It represents a welcome addition to our Mennonite bibliography on peace literature.

Elbing, Ks. —C. J. Dyck

The Hutterian Brethren and Their Beliefs by Peter Hofer (approved by the Committee of Elders, Starbuck, Manitoba: The Hutterian Brethren of Manitoba, 1955.) 48 pp.

A critical defense is made of the Hutterite faith and ethics in view of Resolution 34 of the Rural Municipalities of Manitoba, recently presented to the legislature of that Province and which seeks to limit Hutterite land holdings and to space their colonies a minimum of 40 miles from each other. The basic defense is sound but the harsh, unloving manner of presentation is open to criticism. The writers consider themselves, among other things, "the apple of the Lord's eye" (Zechariah 2:8) and warn authorities not to lay "their hands upon the Lord's people of peace." Hutterian communism is asserted to be the "antidote to Red communism . . . (which has) its servile agents in our Canada." The entire situation, it is claimed, is a close parellel to that of the Israelites under Pharaoh. The truth is claimed for the Hutterite group that the closer a people walk to the Lord the more will they be persecuted, but there seems evident in the booklet a considerable emphasis upon the "rights of citizens" rather than upon a willingness to suffer persecution. The historical background is correct, although presented in scattered fashion. Included are also a wealth of Scriptural references and a very simplified resume of Anabaptist origins.

Elbing, Ks. —C. J. Dyck

Christianity, Communism and History by William Hordern, New York: Abingdon Press, 1954. 175 pp., $2.50.

The book is a critique of the Christian and Marxian views of history, with a particular emphasis on the radical Reformation groups. The writer believes that Communism today gains much of its support because Christians have neglected the social insights inherent in their faith. These insights, he feels, were sounded most clearly by the radical Reformation groups of Europe.

Christianity and Communism are at their greatest odds in their interpretation of history. Although Christianity is a history-affirming religion, it is at complete odds with the Marxian view that history can and will fulfill itself. On the other hand, Communism finds seemingly common ground with Christianity (seen most clearly in the radical sects) in their emphasis on equality of all men; in dissatisfaction with the state; in their future hope (which the communists already believe realized); in their view of riches as among the chief evils of man; in their experiments of communal living. And yet, in spite of this seemingly agreement it is clear that Christianity, both of the church and sect type is basically opposed to Communism, first of all in their view of history.

The writer has succeeded remarkably well in his analysis of Communism, and has thereby outlined a realistically possible approach in combating it. "Because Christianity has sat unheeding in the midst of injustice and oppression, the Communists could make their half-truth seem like the whole truth." Social justice is a necessary part of the Christian answer to Communism, the writer believes, and in this area the Quakers and the Mennonites, particularly, paved the way. "The time has come for Christians to cease apologizing for their gospel and to start living it. Communist fanaticism must be met by Christian enthusiasm."

The book is well written and well documented and of definite interest to ministers, students, and thoughtful laymen. It will have a special interest for Mennonite and other Reformation readers.

Elbing, Ks. —C. J. Dyck

MENNONITE ENCYCLOPEDIA

(Continued from page 191)

contributors are N. van der Zijpp, The Netherlands, and Ernst Crous, Germany.

Volume I of the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* is available to the public through the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, the Mennonite Publication Office, 722 Main Street, Newton, Kansas, and the Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, Hillsboro, Kansas. Members of the various conferences should order their copies through their respective conference book stores. Price per volume is $10. If all four volumes are ordered at this time the reduced price is $33.75 for the four volumes. The Volumes II-IV are expected to come off the press in intervals of one year. *Mennonite Life* is prepared to accept orders for Volume I.

MENNONITE LIFE

An Illustrated Quarterly

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Ten Years of *Mennonite Life*